

EVERYTHING IS LIGHT

The Circle of Total Illumination



Keith Dowman

TIBETAN BUDDHISM, DZOGCHEN

EVERYTHING IS LIGHT, with the Dzogchen tantra *The Circle of Total Illumination* at its core, is a definitive expression of Dzogchen. It presents a view that translates existentially into the great perfection. It is an essential guide to experiential understanding of the apex Dzogchen tantras.

Keith Dowman, the translator, has excelled himself in this brilliant presentation of one of the essential Dzogchen tantras in language accessible to the layman while maintaining a high standard of visionary integrity. The publication of this translation of a secret eighth century Tibetan text, is a breakthrough for all lovers of Dzogchen.

This is a great garuda of a tantra that glides effortlessly and compassionately across the vast vault of mind's nature.

—Bhaka Tulku Pema Rikdzin

My wish is that this work brings great benefit to all Dzogchen practitioners.

—CG Namkhai Norbu.

This evocative translation for the first time brings into luminous English one of the most important and influential of Great Perfection tantras. We owe a great debt to Keith Dowman for his painstaking and yet creative rendering to bring this text and its world across great distances into intimate reach of a contemporary international readership.

—David Germano, U. of Virginia

Keith Dowman is a renowned translator of Dzogchen texts, particularly *Natural Perfection* and *Yeshe Lama* and a well known international teacher of Dzogchen view and meditation. He has been based in Kathmandu, Nepal, for 50 years.



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Everything Is Light

The Great Explanatory Dzogchen Tantra

Thig le Kun gsal chen po'i rgyud

The Circle of Total Illumination

Translated from the Tibetan
with an Introduction by

Keith Dowman

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keithdowman@gmail.com

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www.radicaldzogchen.com

Dedicated to teachers of Dzogchen
in the New Age

Homage to Three Generations of great Dzogchen teachers:

Dudjom Jigtral Yeshe Dorje

Dugse Thrinley Norbu

Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse

*Free from the neurosis of compulsive striving,
Spontaneity is always immanent;
With buddha at the core of our being,
Goal-oriented thought is quieted;
Meditation veils the sublime –
Buddha unveiled, everything is light.*

Tiklay Kunsel, Chapter 9

*In the matrix of intrinsic spaciousness
Our original face shines like the sun,
Its creativity, without bias,
projects everything as light...*

Spaciousness: Canto Thirteen

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Foreword

This wonderful, powerful tantra, amazing in its breadth and depth, can take the reader to an ineffable appreciation of nonduality. It is a definitive expression of Dzogchen, an ultimate exposition of the nondual. It is a final paean of Vajradhara, the buddha spokesperson for that ultimate place. It is utterly glorious in its representation in chapter after chapter of mental constructs that shine and then disintegrate and leave us in soft-focused spaciousness. For these very reasons this foreword is an expression of regret.

The source of the material herein is not in question. On the contrary, this tantra is radical Dzogchen – direct to the heart of the Great Perfection – and as such the basic fibers of that ultimate nondual realization are to be found here. It is the language of translation and the form of expression that require an apology. The issue is no longer secrecy – we are way past the moment when the maintenance of secrecy has any value in the process of assimilating Dzogchen precepts. The challenge now is to translate and present the Dzogchen literature in a way that is immediately and cogently comprehensible. The old language of buddhist academia dragged into contemporary usage is not sufficiently lucid or vital to convey the richness of the Dzogchen tantras. Translators need to stand back and at a distance, walk the talk and transmit it in contemporary prose or poetry. Likewise, the broken English of Tibetan khempas is not adequate to the task of converting the deep and complex meanings of the tantras into coherent prose. Remembering the breadth and depth of understanding that the Nyingma tantras engendered in my lineage teachers, reading my own translation of *The Circle of Total Illumination* I am unhappy and for that reason I begin with an apology.

Another reason for regret is the tantra's cultural content. Although this tantra, like the majority of the tantras of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*, is alleged to have originated outside Tibet, probably in the field of Indic languages in the north-west of the Indian subcontinent, translated into the Tibetan language by Tibetans for the ingestion of Tibetans in the eighth or ninth century, its cultural context is vastly different from ours and to that extent it is redundant. In rebuttal, it may be claimed that the tantra addresses timeless humanity and that the cultural

context is secondary and supplementary. But the cultural interference that is evident in the choice of categories, use of words and similes, questions and dialectic, for example, although secondary, suffuses the form, so that any translation that remains faithful to the original is a palimpsest, the reflection of an antique mindset, belonging in a museum rather than on a bookshelf or shrine of a twenty-first century western buddhist or nondualist.

Finally, I need to excuse tantra itself. This book is an expression of the Dzogchen carried by Vajrayana Buddhism; but I do not believe that Vajrayana has a future in the West. The social fabric is not sufficiently susceptible and receptive. At the turn of the twentieth century, Swami Vivekananda and his Bengali savants taught the *sanatan dharam* of gnostic Hinduism to lapsed Christians who turned what should have been a *sampradaya* of yogins and yoginis into a congregation of unquestioning believers. Vajrayana Buddhism, likewise, has no future in the West because of deeply conditioned (genetic or cultural) assumptions about the nature of reality and because it entails a transmutation of western social values and lifestyles, and an assimilation of rituals, practices and yogas too alien for anything resembling the original to eventuate.

Intractable belief, particularly religious belief, seems to be an expression of existential insecurity, an escapist bolt-hole, and an easy option for those emerging from the hell of samsaric addiction. The belief in Buddha and the Bodhisattvas taught by the lamas, like that in Jesus Christ and the Saints taught by the priests, belongs to the little ones, karmically deleted from the list of players in the cosmic lottery that has rainbow body as the prize. Radical Dzogchen is the distilled essence of Vajrayana, a doorway into the experiential nondual reality of being human, and as such engenders no belief and no argument. This translation and its introduction are my best contribution to an understanding of that realization.

Keith Dowman,
Neduwa, Shambhala,
Budapest, Hungary.
11th August 2016

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Regarding Glossaries and Notes

If *The Circle of Total Illumination* is the key to the tantras, then its glossaries are the key to *The Circle of Total Illumination* and the glossaries of Numeral Terms and of English Dzogchen Technical Terms are the keys to its translation. In the Glossary of English Dzogchen Terms, which includes Tibetan equivalents, many of the technical terms employed in the translation have been thoroughly glossed, providing a rationale for their use and sometimes a critique of alternative equivalents. Further, the Glossary of Numeral Terms (GNT) contains some one hundred and forty entries, most of which are extracted from the body of the text. In order to keep footnotes to a minimum, only a select few have been annotated, and it has been left to the reader to turn to the glossary for elucidation and the original Tibetan. Likewise, rather than clutter up the text with extensive definitions of technical terms in footnotes, the Glossary of English Dzogchen Terms explains the most difficult and prolific terms. The definitions provided in *The Circle of Total Illumination* have been extracted and placed alphabetically at the back of the book in the indexes of English and Tibetan words defined in the text, thus providing a useful tool for scholars of Tibetan. A comparison of the relative incidence of technical Tibetan terms in the *Tiklay Kunsel* can be found as an appendix.

To extract the greatest benefit from this translation of the tantra, it is strongly advised first to read and absorb the *Glossary of English Dzogchen Technical Terms*.

Introduction

This tantra, *The Circle of Total Illumination*, the *Tiklay Kunsel*, is a definitive expression of Dzogchen. It provides the apex view of Dzogchen praxis. It is one of the highest of the atiyoga tantras. It presents a view that translates existentially into 'the great perfection'. It is a root tantra, from which later instruction, explanation and practices developed. It is an explanatory tantra, a text that is the key to all other atiyoga tantras and therefore to the entire Nyingma atiyoga tradition. It is definitive also in that it presents the nondual nature of mind just as it is, in our hearts, without any prevarication, without exposition of preliminary practices or provisional precepts and without the need of foundational instruction or methods of attaining stages along a path.

The meaning of this book's title implies that everything we know directly is awareness in the now and, in that sense, awareness is 'light' – the very cognizant light that is conscious experience, and constitutes inseparable knowing and the knowable. All phenomena in sensory perception are 'light'. The entire pantheon of buddha being is composed of light. Dzogchen is the vehicle of light – light is both the source and the manifestation. Such is the Dzogchen view, which provides recognition of present awareness in the now and recognition of nondual initiatory experience at the beginning, and constitutes the final achievement of the rainbow body at the end. The existential realization of this truth is not immediately accessible in the first and second turnings of the wheel of the buddha-dharma; it is only in the final turning, and particularly in the Nyingma tantras, that it is overtly expressed.

With that understanding, the rudimentary spiritual practice of buddhist cultural training consisting of provisional views and practices that mimic human growth from infant to adult may be severed from the radically different full-bodied mystical insight of Dzogchen. With such insight, the definitive revelation of Dzogchen, a final holistic vision, becomes identical to the universal human experience of nonduality. Since all our experience is comprehended as light, light is the only reality and 'Everything is Light' is, therefore, the seminal message.

This entire tantra can be effectively described as a series of visions, and visionary experience can only be composed of light. We understand, here, first and foremost, that ‘light’ is the light of awareness of both source and manifestation nondual – regardless of whether what is manifested is mundane or sublime, regardless of whether it appears ‘inside’ or ‘outside’, regardless of whether the experience is of this bardo of life or any other bardo. As such, all experience in the immediate now is and can only be an expression of this light of awareness. In that nondual sense is everything light. Consequently, all experience is ‘nondual’ insofar as the light of awareness has rendered experience conscious and knowledge knowable. It has always been nondual and cannot be anything else. No union of separate ‘light of awareness’ on the one hand and ‘experience’ on the other can occur.

Everything is light and everything is a sublime vision of Vairochana’s buddha-mandala. Yet distinct samadhis, described in the hidden sectioning of the tantra, are distinguished as separate visions of light. The Vairochana buddha-mandala, described herein, is a vision of light; the buddha-deities – whether conceived in their psychological actuality or in their symbolic anthropomorphic form – are lightforms. Consider the vocabulary employed in Tibetan to describe nondual reality, so difficult to reproduce in English: it consists essentially of innumerable synonyms of light. Finally, the most effective way to introduce Dzogchen itself, to point at the nondual experience of the nature of reality, is to evoke the light of the mind.

‘Everything is light’ is the overarching message of this tantra. Its implications are decisive in radical Dzogchen – Dzogchen stripped down to its seminal bones – and its ramifications are of crucial import in our everyday lives. One primary implication of the initiatory vision of everything as light – Vajradhara’s nondual view – is that burgeoning therapeutic cults and the vestiges of redundant religion are at best mild antidotes to the inadequacies of the human condition and that new age ‘spiritual practice’ is redundant. What we have in the here and now is reality itself, and nothing else has real value or meaning. Look into this very moment and it opens up into a utopia that displays all experience as perfect just as it, so that nothing exists to correct or change. Any movement in the direction of ‘improvement’ is counterproductive and undermines natural perfection. Any goal other than recognition of present sensory lightform, internal or external, is an aberration. Any effort applied to attain something that does not already exist or to facilitate what is naturally arising in the now creates

obscuration. Since this tantra demonstrates the principle of nonaction and authentic compassion, presenting Dzogchen atiyoga in a nascent form, it provides recognition of the ineffable parts of an ever-changing evanescent empowering unitary experience.

The ninety-seven chapters of this tantra comprehensively cover the many aspects of Dzogchen and this introductory space is insufficient for a detailed explanatory commentary. Rather, this introduction is used to address contemporary issues that can obscure full and immediate awareness of existential Dzogchen.

Simultaneous with recognition of the nature of mind in radical Dzogchen is the understanding that elaborate meditation – and along with it all ‘spiritual practice’ – is superfluous. If spiritual practice is ultimately useless, so also is dogma and cant, whether it be rational and humanistic or religious and apocalyptic. Buddhist belief systems that define a specific starting point, an elaborate path and a goal, for instance, provide dogma tailored to the requirements of adherents of religious institutions structured by authoritarian hierarchies that spoon-feed their adherents on a graduated path. Thereby, by default, spiritual materialism infects the minds of well-intentioned people susceptible to attachment to the intent of coherent oral or written soteriological teaching. Radical Dzogchen, free of belief, cannot be dogmatic; indeed it is entirely pragmatic in that the view arises spontaneously in response to the requirements of every unique moment. For that reason no lineage, no lama, no human teacher, has any exclusive rights over expression of the nature of mind, nor possesses any special handle on any form of skillful means. Nor has any individual in the past, present or future, any final or monopolistic expression of the view – which is, in truth, no-view.

Predicated upon the defining experience of recognition of the nature of mind, it becomes incontrovertible that no authority – individual or institutional – has the right nor the capacity to dictate the form of the teaching or the rules of conduct for any other being. It is self-evident that no individual has more or less proximity to Dzogchen than any other; absolute existential equality reigns. By the same token, Dzogchen cannot be caught in a restrictive institution, because the real Dzogchen community, its authentic sangha, has no bounds, and since no overt signs or material achievement manifest, no hierarchy of accomplishment can be certified. Dzogchen reality is ineffable and inexpressible, unreified and indeterminate. It manifests in uncountable

ways across an infinite spectrum of possibility in response to ever-unique situations.

The clarification of the nonduality of Dzogchen is a principal thread in this *Tiklay Kunsel* tantra. But although we may look for an uncompromising rigorous discursive expression of a nondual vision or view in these atiyoga tantras of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*, of course it cannot be found. Nonduality cannot be expressed or described; it can only be implied and inferred as in the early chapters of this tantra. Each reader down the centuries, and even in different cultures, finds his own elixir in a sea of poison; reading through the text of this tantra lines and verses (slokas) that point at that all-inclusive reality jump readily into mind.

In this existential drama of Dzogchen, the securities of religion as an attraction and an attachment provide an enticement to take refuge in fixed dogma and practice. Such temptation is overcome by treating the ritual, offerings, worship, liturgies, dogma and belief systems of religion as the phenomenology of primal awareness, which, of course, includes equally all human experience, profane as well as sacred. What is excluded by present awareness is attachment to – and exclusive belief in – any specific phenomenon or appearance. The habit of church-going, for example, entailing prayer (The Lord's Prayer), offering (the monetary collection), worship (ritualized humility), liturgy (the Creed), the sacrament (Eucharist, baptism, marriage), and so on, all recognized in the all-inclusive light of the mind, is nonmeditation. Further, although we may mouth the words that pronounce Jesus Christ the only light, truth and way, or articulate refuge in the Triple Gem, or assert that Allah is Great, our recognition of mind's nature in those words dissolves the specific particles of vocal energy in the timeless moment of their arising and dissolve their particularity and partiality, together with any fixation upon them, into a unitary field of cognition. Thus relative and absolute are united in the ultimate ineffable dharmakaya of the here and now.

If religion is abhorred by Dzogchen, philosophy – considered as an academic discipline rather than an existential praxis – is of greater anathema. What can be more detrimental to unitary awareness than a discipline engaged in asserting the validity of mental constructs, which by nature are dualistic, imposing conceptual super-impositions upon the ineffable here and now, and insisting upon the opacity of the emperor's new clothes. If Dzogchen has a moment that involves the intellect, then it is in a provisional capacity, soon to be relinquished,

not with shame or sorrow but with abandonment and glee. If the *Tiklay Kunsel* appears to have a philosophical rather than an existential purpose, then chapter 86 on the fourfold pointing out has not been experientially absorbed. It is imperative, of course, that we comprehend the secret precepts so that we can bathe in the supra-rational, intellect-transcending, present awareness that is at the heart of Dzogchen; for that reason the definitions and explanations of the language of the *Tiklay Kunsel*, its metaphors and similes, are of crucial significance. But if the precepts themselves – and the *Tiklay Kunsel* is composed of them – are taken to have any value over and above the momentary illumination provided by their cognition, then their very point has been lost. The leap into the nondual experience of the light of awareness has been precluded by the confining concepts of an intellectual cage.

The practical Dzogchen issue, here, is the infectious vanity attendant upon academic study that is created by the delusory, supposedly incontrovertible, conclusions deduced from refined logical analysis. The intellect, engorged by its own lucidity and cogency, forgets or ignores the precept that logic and rational reasoning have no authority in Dzogchen, where the intuitive experiential light of the heart rules. Reason leads us astray when its intrinsic radiance and its emptiness are veiled; readers whose recognition of the nature of mind is yet weak and immature are in danger of being swept away into arrant materialism. When the light of present awareness shines strongly, rational and logical thought is humbled, demoted or disappears entirely.

Dzogchen is validated by existential and mystical experience. When it is treated as an academic discipline, when a teacher relies upon reason to convince his students of the nature of mind, it becomes a travesty. Insofar as the contemporary western academic milieu entails goal orientation and fulfillment in a contentious profession, it militates against Dzogchen realization and to the extent that academic publishers are restricted by commercial and sectarian concerns, the truth of nondual experience is lost in volumes of empty verbiage. In the current atmosphere of fashionable and commercial western Buddhism, both authors and publishers, like Mara's daughters, reach out to tempt the intellect, filling libraries and the internet with their exuberant hubris and emollient prose, occluding the nature of mind, veiling mystical experience. It is as if precepts that can open up into existential understanding were presented rather for the sake of their own aesthetic form, mimicking 'art for art's sake'.

The Quantum Leap

'Quantum mysticism' has provided useful metaphors that move the rational mind towards acceptance of the anomalous phenomenology of nonduality. That the arch-priests of scientific materialism are arrant dualists with a methodology steeped in the principles of subject-object dualism and that these metaphors have no relevance to quantum mechanics field theory is immaterial; we baby-boomers of the twentieth century have been conditioned to accept the physicists' pontification and prognostication over those of priests and philosophers, and thus the metaphors derived from quantum physics gain currency, validity and efficacy. When we are told, for example, that the electron, which revolves around the nucleus of the atom, moves in and out of different orbits without apparent cause or condition, leaving no trace of its previous revolution, our rational intellects may space out and a moment may arise adventitiously when the nature of mind can shine through and an existential understanding of 'nonabiding' may arise.

Moreover, we are told, when the observer/experimenter turns his concentrated attention to that particle, attempting to pin it down, it appears to vanish, as if acute dualization of subjective and objective aspects of the perceptual process dissolve the field of consciousness, and as if only with a soft focus in which the entire field is included does it again become visible. Further, when it has apparently disappeared, the electron no longer has the characteristics of a particle, but seems to assume the attributes of a wave. Look for the wave and find a particle; look for a particle and find a wave. Our senses are not to be trusted; the multi-dimensional web of illusion is beyond the intellect to comprehend! Then, when an electron is halved and the halves separated, by as much as thousands of miles, they still react as a unitary pair, as if the space they inhabited was not the four dimensional space-time of our ordinary delusory experience, but an enigmatic matrix in which our common sense assumptions about reality are mistaken.

Perhaps an even more poignant ramification of the quantum myth is the desubstantiation of our ordinary environment and the life within it. If the atoms which constitute all things whatsoever are in fact lacking any nucleus and consist of elements that at best come in and out of apparent existence and even when in existence have no location or constancy, how can the forms which they compose be any more substantial? Here, consistency of logical thought leads us to a

description of *maya*, the phenomenal appearances that arise in the mind through the medium of the senses. The first century A.D. Indian metaphysician Nagarjuna promoted eight metaphors to illustrate *maya*: the wonderment of magical illusion, the reflection of the moon in water, optical illusion, mirage, dream, echo, cloud cuckoo land, and apparition.

Technically speaking 'the quantum leap' refers to the change of an electron's orbital revolution around its nucleus. The same particle is revolving around the same nucleus in the same way, but the orbit has shifted. No explanation for the change has been devised. No one saw it happen. No one pulled any strings to make the change. There is no apparent cause. It was not a karmic, causal, event. No defining conditions through which the event can be replicated are evident. It is what can be called a 'synchronic event' in that it is without apparent cause or condition. For us 'the quantum leap' has the connotation of synchronicity; but also in the wake of a noncausal, or 'spontaneous' event, wherein the intellect has let go momentarily, an intimation of the nature of mind arises, a moment of initiatory experience in which present awareness has regained its primacy. In this way the quantum leap provides us with an analogy for the move from the narrow linear view of rational thinking to the all-inclusive nondual view of Dzogchen, which is elucidated here in this circle of total illumination, in all-illuminating holistic essence.

The Pointing Out

Dzogchen, or more particularly, the realization of the nature of mind, may not be transmitted from one mind to another, but it can be pointed at, like a finger pointing at the moon. Simple pointing out is enough because what is to be pointed at has always been there and always will be there and nothing can be done to remove it, to subtract from it or to add to it, or change it in any way. To realize the nature of mind, nothing need be created or contrived, for that would mean new material, new product, and much effort, like building a house. The nature of mind or the primal ground has always been present and we have always been subliminally aware of it, but in the end we have been distracted by the ramifications of embodiment and an inferred need to survive, to strive and thrive for survival, and surviving to reproduce the species. In general, however, the fear of failure and particularly fear of death, the attraction of the little sensual pleasure we can eke out of our lives, or the boredom and enervation with which life

enshrouds us, veils what is beyond language to express and what is hidden beneath the limen of ordinary consciousness.

The *Tiklay Kunsel* shows us several ways in which the pointing out is to be done. First, through articulation of the Dzogchen view, a direct introduction to the primal ground of being, to all-inclusive envisionment, and to trikaya, can be signified. Through clever juxtaposition of words, through poetry and prose the nature of mind can be suggested. By naming a part of the sublime vision of Dzogchen, the vision may be conjured like a jewel envisioned by knowledge of just one of its facets, or like knowledge of a whole through a holographic particle. Further, comprehending the relationship of parts may effect the same result. Powerful poetic tools that can be utilized to optimize that intimation are simile and metaphor, or analogy, like 'the reflection of the moon in water', as discussed below. Thus, pointing out the view through evocative oral verbalization may induce the meditation, or rather, the nonmeditation.

This pointing out of present awareness, or introduction to the nature of mind, is a mouth to ear conveyance of verbal information. It may appear to constitute a condition, a method by which a neophyte can be initiated into the Dzogchen mandala. Surely, the verbal elucidation of Dzogchen is a discursive mantra that magically conditions the uninitiated in a way that provides initiatory experience. Such an exposition, surely, is a wide doorway into the primal ground of being, and every utterance of one of the sacred words that define an aspect of the ineffable, surely, is a window upon the nature of mind. Surely, Dzogchen is accessible through the scriptures, through tantras, agamas and upadeshas. Such assertions, however, cannot be accepted in radical Dzogchen because the horse may be led to water but it cannot be made to drink. Only if the horse is thirsty will it drink; only by virtue of an auspicious synchronistic moment free of motivation and intentionality can intimation of the nature of mind arise, and arise by itself, spontaneously, as initiatory experience. Thus, the pointing out is not a cause or a primary condition for recognition of the nature of mind; rather, it may better be conceived as an amplification of a pre-existent situation that may awaken the listener to the possibility of recognition. The moment will not be grasped existentially, however, unless there is an absence of aspiration, a moment of nonaction, in the putative initiate's mind. If any trace of hope or fear lingers, the best that can be achieved is a rational understanding or an intellectual appreciation.

This same principle is valid in regard to the fourfold symbolic pointing out described in chapter 86 and also to the ritual empowerments in chapters 62 and 63.

Secondly, regarding this fourfold symbolic pointing out, the *Tiklay Kunsel* describes a direct pointing out of the nature of mind through symbols. This pointing out by an exhibition of symbols is accompanied by a discursive statement of the view by the teacher, as described above. The pertinent phrase here is 'exhibition of symbols' – the pointing out is done through symbols.

What is described in chapter 86 provides the bones of a ritual that later becomes the Empowerment of Creative Presence (*rikpai tsewong*). But the initiatory agent in this ritual may gather initiates into the sanctum sanctorum and place a symbol of reality carefully before their eyes while reciting the sacred formula, but it is a synchronic moment that cannot in anyway be contrived in which the nature of mind is recognized. The rider may bring his horse to water but he cannot make it drink, and when the horse does indeed drink, if the rider takes the credit he is preposterously inappropriate. To invoke the magical power of the ritual or the magician as the crucial factor when initiates do indeed recognize the nature of mind in a formal situation is likewise absurd. If it is objected that sometimes attendees at public initiations frequently appear to experience unusual or transcendent states, it is useful to recall that such states are commonly experienced at pop concerts and football matches. The nature of mind is not something that can be objectified or described heuristically.

To restate this issue, the discursive pointing out of the nature of mind is a ritual performance similar to the ritual of empowerment and initiation. It may 'set us up' for the real event that occurs at a synchronic moment, but as a series of physical and verbal karmas in a space-time continuum it cannot by itself induce a realization of the nature of mind. No matter how efficacious the ritual, it is a pattern of relativity that cannot induce the ultimate acausal reality. The relative and the absolute are a unity in the here and now and that ultimacy cannot be induced. Any attempt at inducement will end in failure. The most that can be achieved is a lowering of the threshold at which a synchronic moment can be recognized, or a dissolution of obstacles that inhibit recognition of what is already there. Any movement at all, any stirring away from or towards whatever is already present, merely accentuates the duality that we seek to resolve.

In a historical perspective, it appears that in Tibet, by the eighteenth century, the simple pointing out as formulated in this tantra had become an elaborate ceremonial as described in Jigmelingpa's *Longchen Nyintik*, which is the principal cycle of Dzogchen liturgical and explanatory texts emanating from that period. Perhaps this development reveals a degradation of time from dharmayuga to kaliyuga, when the human mind can no longer apprehend meaning experientially and merely stores preceptual implications as discursive information, data to be used when self-interest determines that benefit may accrue. Perhaps this evolution from simple to elaborate ritual indicates a failure of instantaneous recognition and a move towards faith in a graduated path. Perhaps it is evidence that for us in this kaliyuga, the fag-end of time, the ritual method is at best the placement of a mental escape hatch, a mind frame in which meaning can be directly assimilated at a later date, a set up for use down the path, or like ritual empowerment merely a ploughing and drilling and setting of seeds in the rational mind for a later maturation by acausal means, at a synchronicitous moment, for a life-changing insight. Perhaps we should accept this tantra's implicit precept that even the slightest movement towards Dzogchen as a goal is the sour grapes of those who cannot let go.

The empowerments described in chapter 62 are special methods of pointing out. The symbolic introductions of chapter 86 are a simple pointing out, whereas the vase empowerment and so on are highly ritualistic, so complex indeed that the point can be easily missed. The point is that we are already empowered, but we can recognize that fact only when we are told authoritatively and in a way that bypasses the critical and dictatorial dualistic intellect. It is as if in a social gathering we cannot communicate with other guests until we have been formally introduced. Some minds need authorization in order to feel empowered. Chapter 62 iterates, 'Unsought, unconferrd, empowerment is replete in the primal ground.' The ritual empowerments utilize most of the principal symbols in the higher tantra arsenal pointing out their actual meaning, unpacking them and asserting a nondual relationship with them, 'neither in union nor separation'. If the ambience of a public Tibetan ritual empowerment, its sensory input, its mixed psychic nuances, its evident cultural specifics are overwhelming, the pages of the *Tiklay Kunsel* are not. It is remarkable that the tantra does not use the word 'guru' or 'lama' at all; the secret precepts are the message and the teacher is Vajradhara, the nature of mind.

Gradual and Instantaneous Realization

This discussion of transmission and ritual bears upon the contemporary issue of instantaneous recognition versus the developing present awareness of the graduated path. This issue is not addressed explicitly in the *Tiklay Kunsel*, but wherever 'nonaction', 'nonmeditation', 'nonpractice' 'non-goal-orientation' or 'sublime vision' is mentioned, instantaneous realization is implied. Garab Dorje may have ignored the issue because it is an academic consideration pursued by analysts observing Dzogchen from the outside. For the adept whose initiatory experience has provided recognition of the nature of mind, experience of reality is described in the early chapters of the tantra and the issue is an irrelevancy, a scholastic aberration. For those who have yet to identify the nature of mind, the issue consists of a horde of concepts to kick about on an academic playing field, or to address in formal debate in the classroom. It may appear to be resolved academically by a belief in the inseparability of the gradual and instantaneous, but until confidence in experience replaces attachment to mental constructs, such a belief is a burden that forces the scholar to his knees, an impervious, insuperable, obstacle.

The unity of gradual and instantaneous, however, may be given as a precept in the Dzogchen view, where the gradual path is understood as a succession of karmically determined moments and the instantaneous pathless path as the recognition of the nature of mind in whatever karmically determined moment occurs simultaneous with its arising. In this way, even those who deny their recognition of the nature of mind and strive on a ladder path towards an undiscovered goal have a view that supports an experiential intimation of it. Without this precept, adherents of the graduated path become increasingly bemired in a temporal sadhana wherein the goal is reified and the path exclusive. Certainly all beings under the sun are candidates for a synchronic moment of initiatory experience independent of cause and condition, but a supramundane lifestyle of ritual devotion and spiritual praxis does not take anyone a whit closer to that acausal apotheosis.

Again, in this perspective the view is not to be taken as a cause. The view, which is no-view, *is* the meditation; where the cause is not separate from the effect, the effect may just as well be considered the cause. But the view cannot be learned; no amount of striving on a graduated path can induce it; it can only be existentially-experientially realized. Elements of the view may be pointed out, but again the

introduction to the nature of mind cannot be considered a cause or a condition. The pointing out itself is the meditation. Cause and effect are indistinguishable; the starting point and the goal are one; no path or technique links samsara to nirvana. Reality arises by itself out of itself, spontaneously, and nothing can be done to induce spontaneity except to 'hurry up and wait'. The precepts of the view in themselves are the nature of mind; there is nothing to do and nowhere to go.

Sublime Vision

The sublime vision of Dzogchen is without any partiality or bias. It has a total absence of preference, which includes an absence of preference for any space or any time; the vision can therefore be called nonspatial and nontemporal. Such a vision has neither attributes nor any particular character. It has no tendency towards any change, towards any improvement or ideal. It is complete and perfect in itself. It is this vision that is enjoyed by the Dzogchen vidhyadharas, the knowledge-holders or bearers of pure presence. From their perspective, no temporal progression is possible because past, present and future have been integrated into Great Time, where lineal time consists of a series of timeless moments that effectively negate any sense of temporal development. Living in the first of the three kalpas that denote degrees of progressive degradation of mind from nondual unity to dualistic alienation, the vidhyadhara sees no distinction between buddha, bodhisattva and human being. Here, it is not simple longevity that has been attained but immortality itself where neither birth nor death is suffered.

From the perspective of ordinary sentient beings, from a seemingly external point of view that feels temporal progression and perceives it objectively, such vidhyadharas are part of a succession of individuals who have realized the nature of mind and have fully assimilated it, adepts for whom sublime vision is the ordinary way of seeing. But since sublime vision has no attribute, it cannot be recognized as such and cannot be identified. Since it is indeterminate in nature, it cannot be expressed; no stance of mind (mudra), no symbolic word or act, and no oral teaching can convey that vision.

In regard to the vital issue of lineage, then, to the vidhyadhara it is an immediate connection to the essence, the essence that is no different from the appearance. Only the unitary nondual experience of reality

exists, where that unity is comprised of the three dimensions, the three kayasⁱ – dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya – iconographically depicted as Samantabhadra, Vajrasattva and the ‘Guru’, personified as Garab Dorje. That is the ‘short lineage’. From the outside, conceived in time, the lineage is called the ‘long lineage’. It begins with Samantabhadra, Vajrasattva and Garab Dorje and the early non-Tibetan teachers, Manjushrimitra and Shri Singha and then continues with Bairotsana (Vairochana) and the adepts of the Tibetan empire period and an unbroken succession of tulkus down the centuries to this day and to our masters, Dudjom Rinpoche and Kanjur Rinpoche. And, yet, since their sublime vision is ineffable, beyond expression, the lineage transmits nothing: it is this absence that is called ‘gnostic compassion’. That the Tibetan ecclesiastical establishment recognizes a distinction between an institutional lineage, which is a formal, hierarchical lineage, and a ‘practice lineage’ of committed yogin-adepts, is nugatory.

The lineages in the higher, Dzogchen, tantras are basically counted as threefold: the lineages of sublime vision (mind), symbolic demonstration (body) and oral transmission (speech). It is clear that the lineage of sublime vision, described above, does not entail any transmission or teaching. Indeed, in another nondual tradition, as Tilopa said to Naropa to preface his instruction, ‘Mahamudra cannot be taught.’ We may deduce, therefore, that ‘sublime vision’, the ‘nature of mind’, the ‘primal ground’ or ‘nonduality’ cannot be transmitted, that it cannot be conveyed or demonstrated positively in space-time. Neither nondual mind nor initiatory experience can be conveyed in or across space-time in either symbols or words. It can, however, be pointed at; its existence can be mooted; its name can be spoken. Thereby, what is always present, what can never be alienated or lost, what is immutable and changeless, what is neither united nor separated, is allowed recognition. That recognition fulfills Garab Dorje’s first incisive precept.

To express it in different terms, the direct introduction by symbolic or oral pointing out occurs in the nirmanakaya dimension, where minds wandering in samsaric confusion have the good fortune to experience magical nirmanakaya emanation. Such emanation provides symbolic or oral indications appropriate to the moment, so that at a juncture of

ⁱ The three kayas (*sku gsum*) are three existential dimensions, or, rather, three existential manifestations of nondual reality.

synchronicity the *nature* of mind is perceived as sensory appearance in which any distinction between the subjective knower and the objective known is collapsed within the act of knowing.

To conclude the stanza by which Tilopa began his instruction of Naropa, ‘Mahamudra cannot be taught, but most devoted Naropa, “here is your instruction”.’ The pointing out is done by exposition of the view as revealed in chapter 40 herein and may be construed as demonstration of oral transmission. Chapter 71 lists the five defining principles of effective exposition of the view (agama teaching, *lung*): purity of tradition, unconditional teaching, credible transmission, uncorrupted transcription, and harmony with other aspects of the tradition. The pointing out is also effected by the ritual of symbolic transmission as described in chapter 31, and by visual sharing of symbols, symbolic gestures, or involuntary body language, all of which may be construed as demonstration of symbolic transmission.

One of the subsidiary lineages of oral transmission – as an extension of ‘uncorrupted transcription’ in the list of five defining principles – is the lineage of ‘the precious library’. Insofar as concepts by their shape and color, in their juxtaposition can induce mental states – intellectual, emotional or sentimental – books may substitute for an enlightened human teacher (*kbempo*). With equal certainty, we may assert that some crucial value is infused into an oral communication by a voice that is existentially cognizant of what is articulated. It is as if the vibration of authentic speech affects the energetic quality of being in ways that mental constructs divorced from experience of mind’s nature cannot. A greater intensity, resilience and durability of understanding are provided by authenticity. Further, to the extent that the precious texts of the library are less bemired by the emotional resonance of attachment and subjective cultural baggage, the words standing out on the page much as colors arise out of the primal ground, they may provide a better conduit of transmission than a faulty, inauthentic, oral source. From the inclusion of the word ‘transcription’ within the principles of oral transmission, it may be inferred that a transcribed talk from a teacher with whose voice one is familiar has an added value.

Dzogchen and Entheogens

Consideration of the validity of experience, and the relative authenticity of states of mind can be broadened to include evaluation of

chemically induced entheogenic¹ experience. If durability of the epiphany is the criterion used to evaluate our best psychedelic experience, entheogens must be demoted to the level of ritual initiation, which provide an variable reflection dependent upon external conditions, showing us what is possible, like the *petit mort* of orgasm. Authentic experience of the nature of mind produces an ineradicable potency. Further, like ritual, entheogens provide circumstances that do not automatically induce knowledge of the nature of mind, but, rather, provide an opportunity for synchronicitous moments of full recognition. Besides that wholly positive insight, lesser benefits accruing from psychedelic experience may include significant boosts to confidence on a graduated path. If, firstly, returning from a spacious experience of light we can admit degrees or levels of freedom from dualistic, materialist, confinement, we can be happy with who we are, allowing the principle of nonaction to intervene. A taste of an ultimate state, though ephemeral, still unfamiliar and quickly forgotten, turns the mind away from cloying samsaric attachment. States of mind that have been ignored as mental aberrations or as virtually psychotic or antisocial, may now be assimilated to consciousness as positive and transcendent. If such benefits are admitted as conditional, entheogens may be accepted as useful tools on a graduated path to elevated consciousness that may or may not contain supersensory powers (*riddhi*), and that acceptance can be done without placing them on a pre-eminent pedestal enthroned as a cause or condition of buddha.

Entheogens may also be capable of repatterning genetic karma, undermining mental habits of a lifetime or loosening the binds of more recent social conditioning. If so, even to a limited degree, the inference must be that entheogens can be useful in diminishing, removing or simply recognizing the transparence of obstacles to awareness of the synchronicitous moment.

As a postscript to these remarks about entheogenic experience, it should be stressed that use of mind-altering substances to induce psychedelic experience with the aim of entering into the nature of mind, or maintaining recognition of the nature of mind, is fundamentally contrary to the Dzogchen view. Effective use of chemical substances implies dependence upon chemical reaction, and

¹ 'Relating to mind altering substances': it has a Greek root, literally 'becoming divine within'.

such dependence implies motivated activity, which flies in the face of nonaction and that is the one single overarching Dzogchen precept. As a skillful means to attain susceptibility to synchronicity, such activity is as valid as any meditation practice with a goal in mind. But, thereby, the karma of goal-orientation is reinforced, and although a positive karma replaces a negative karma, because the 'rainbow body' is a function of no-karma, the all-inclusive envisionment of the primal ground will still be as far away as the earth is from the sky.

It must also be unequivocally emphasized that the substances referred to in the empowerments mentioned in *Tiklay Kunsel* are symbolic substances. No shred of evidence exists that organic entheogens have ever been employed ritually in the buddhist tantra. This might not be so in the tantric Hindu frame that preceded the advent of buddhist tantra and has run parallel to it until the present day. As in the principle of trituration in homeopathy, which asserts that the more refined and subtle the substance the more powerful the medicinal effect, if the body-mind is sensitized and purified, symbolic substances – or even notional substances – may be more effective than the wholly gross material product. Again, however, the gross substance may be more appropriate, more effective, in cases of damaged or diseased body-mind.

Buddha-Symbology and Trikaya

The issues that this Dzogchen tantra resolves are numerous. In particular, within the frame of trikaya, deity-symbology is introduced and justified. The mahayoga practice of visualization of archetypal anthropomorphic symbols and recitation of buddha-mantras is not prescribed here; rather, the buddha-symbology of the mandala is a description of the psycho-physical elements of every experience couched in the symbolic language of sublime buddha form. The mandala is the creative expression – the creativity – of the ineffable pure presence of the timeless moment. It is the potency of that creative expression, however, that assimilates every possible element of the wheel of life, every experience of which sentient beings are capable – to present awareness in the now.

Stupas and ritual vajras, for example, are complex plastic symbols of mind; the vajra chain is a multiple graphic symbol of mind; a *tiklay* is a graphic mandalic symbol of mind; the five colors of light are chromatic symbols of mind; metaphors are verbal symbols of mind; and buddha visualizations and images are anthropomorphic symbols

of mind; in Dzogchen all symbols – indeed all sensory objects whatsoever – are symbols of the nature of mind, but it is the buddha form that is of primary concern here.

Only one reality (*chos nyid*) can be known, and that is the zero dimension known technically as ‘dharmakaya’, which is nondual and therefore ineffable. What metaphor evokes direct perception of the zero dimension? Emptiness? Immediately reality is conceptualized, however, in the first moment of apperception, a primary duality is conceived. In Dzogchen this is defined as awareness of the now at one pole and spaciousness at the other, where spaciousness is the ground of all form. These polar principles are represented by the anthropomorphic buddha symbols Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri in indissoluble union. In a similar moment of apperception the original ineffable singularity is conceived as a trinity, trikaya, three existential dimensions or three sublime forms (*kayas*). These three are dharmakaya, the nondual, formless, holistic seed of light, and sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya which are form dimensions, the inner form dimension manifesting spontaneously as an inner vision of the five primary colors and the external form dimension manifesting in a vision of the various realms of existence in a sensorially cognized environment. These three dimensions are said to be ‘neither united nor separated’.

The three dimensions of trikaya may also be conceived as three levels of a smoothly evolving display, from the zero dimension through a subtle internal dimension to the level of unitary outside and inside appearances. These levels and all intervening levels are, therefore, congruous, all containing the product of what has gone before and the potential of what comes after. For this reason a symbol representing the outer dimension may enlighten the inner dimension and all stages of manifestation in between. Likewise, since the outer also contains the secret zero-dimension and, of course, the secret the outer dimensions, every symbol contains the totality. Such an understanding is predicated upon an existential understanding of the truth of nonduality as the one and only natural condition of being.

The three dimensions of being have absolutely no substantial existence or valid ontic status. The three dimensions’ names refer to three different perspectives on nondual awareness; identical, empty and formless in essence, intellectual – conceptual – differentiation of the unitary field of experience creates an illusion of separate mental, energetic and physical qualities. While ‘feeling’ the actuality of the

three dimensions, in an oft-repeated phrase they are known to be ‘neither united with nor separated’ from. This phrase describes the nonseparation and nonidentification of the three aspects of being (the three dimensions), as well as the nonseparation and nonidentification of sentient beings and buddha.

These three separate but identical aspects of the experience of reality (dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya) are perhaps best represented as symbolic syllables – white OM, red AH, and blue HUNG, but for the ordinary lay devotee and especially for the adept of mahayoga they are represented by three symbolic anthropomorphic forms – Amitabha, Avalokiteshvara and Sakyamuni. The essential identity of these three is symbolically restated in the congruity of their graphic proportions (*tiktse*). These three sublime forms, like the five sublime forms of present awareness considered below, and indeed the entire forty-twofold mandala of the peaceful deities described in terms of Vajradhara or Vairochana’s reality, are to be understood as symbols of the light that invests them as their own immaculate nature. For that reason *kaya* has been translated herein as ‘sublime form’, a term intending to evoke an immanent luminosity. The three sublime forms are at once the three dimensions of being and the three sublime images that symbolize them. To stretch the meaning of the word ‘congruity’ to include similarity of metaphysical attributes, all the forty-two peaceful buddha-deities of the Vairochana mandala (see Appendix 1) are congruous. Further, each of the buddha-forms comprising the mandala subsumes all the others.

The Vision of Pure Presence

In the reality of pure presence, everything is light. In the ineffable nondual essence of all experience as pure presence, everything is light. In the first moment of apperception, the totality experience of light is called ‘the primal ground’, ‘the zero dimension’, ‘the essence of dharmakaya’, ‘all-inclusive envisionment’, and ‘present awareness of the now’, and that is symbolized as Samantabhadra or Vajradhara. In a second moment of apperception, that ultimacy is called the union of spaciousness and awareness, sublime form and awareness, which is symbolized by Samantabhadra *yab-yum*, Samantabhadra in union with his consort Samantabhadri (male and female naked blue buddha forms). In a third moment, it is referred to as the two dimensions (dharmakaya and rupakaya), or three dimensions ‘trikaya’ (dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya) symbolized as Amitabha, Avalokiteshvara and Padmasambhava. In a further

moment, the forty-two qualities of sambhogakaya arise, and they are symbolized as the forty-two peaceful deities.

The forty-two deities are conceptual and visual reifications of aspects of the totality-experience of pure presence. Every totality-experience is the same and in its entirety, herein, it is called a 'sublime form'. In the forty-twofold vision, those elements are radiant sambhogakaya forms of the timeless moment in dharmakaya, sambhogakaya or nirmanakaya dimensions. Such spheres of radiance are symbolized by buddha-forms, the images that are described in the Vairochana mandala. In the culturally conditioned Tibetan mind no distinction between the anthropomorphic image and the synchronistically arising timeless moment of pure presence exists. Here in the *Tiklay Kunsel* sublime image and sublime form are denominated by a single phrase.

Therefore, the mandala of Mahavairochana comprising the principal and his retinue, forty-two buddha-deities¹ in all, described in this tantra, are not to be visualized and cultivated and 'practiced' through recitation of the mantra that is the euphonic form of Vairochana. It is not raw material for mahayoga practice. Rather, the mandala is a symbolic representation in anthropomorphic terms of Dzogchen nonduality manifesting in forty-two different aspects or 'qualities'. However the qualities of these forty-two buddha-deities are depicted, all of them, without exception, represent the ineffable nondual nature of being, the empty purity of pure presence that is the nature of all experience. These forty-two symbols all invoke the spontaneous all-inclusive envisionment of the primal ground, which is the unitary field of self-aware spaciousness. Their enlightened qualities, their specific symbolic characteristics that are indicated by their names and the dimension to which they belong, are secondary to what the meaning of their congruity indicates – namely, the unitary, self-aware nature of the display.

The application of anthropomorphic symbols in various buddha forms in an elaborate three dimensional mandala pattern, however, irrefutably confirms the category of this tantra as nondual Vajrayana (*gsang sngags*). How then are we to perceive the mandala in the frame of radical Dzogchen divorced from buddhist roots? The answer is as simple as the Dzogchen view. According to that rigorously uncompromising gaze, we identify our nondual nature as the root and

¹ See Appendix 1 for a categorization of the mandala.

source of all experience whatsoever, of all samsaric and nirvanic phenomena, and enjoy that vision of reality as existential reality. The mandala as a field of internal appearances, a sambhogakaya phenomenon, is a complex three-dimensional symbol of colored light and form representing each and every timeless moment of awareness.

Then allowing the intellect primacy for a moment or two, we can name the parts of that vision. First we visualize Samantabhadra as the cognitive emptiness and Samantabhadri as the spacious mudra of the here and now. Then employing the metapsychological categories of classical Buddhism we name the five cognitive components of present awareness and represent them as the five sambhogakaya buddhas of sublime form in a mandala pattern. At the center is the totality of lightform represented as Vairochana, white in color, the essence of fear; to the east is the ultimate vajra stability of awareness represented by Akshobhya, blue, the essence of rejective anger; to the south is the sameness of every moment of awareness represented by Ratnasambhava, yellow, the essence of divine pride; to the west is the 'discriminating' or 'differentiating' aspect of awareness represented by Amitabha, red, the essence of desire; and to the north is the all-accomplishing, immanent actualizing quality of awareness represented by Amoghasiddhi, green, the essence of jealousy.

Still identifying with the present awareness and looking figuratively from the inside out, what we are looking at is corporeality and its environment, and, to label the categories of its components, we use the qualities of the five great elements which are represented by the *yum*-consorts – the mudras – of the five sublime buddha forms. Thus, the space that provides extension for accommodation of oneself and the environment is represented by Vairochana's blue consort Dhatishvari, who, like all of the five consorts, is inextricably and inseparably united with her consort. The apparent solidity of the elements of all our experience is the 'solidity' of earth, providing cohesion, represented by blue Buddhalochana in union with Akshobhya. The heat or temperature of phenomenal experience is the heat of fire providing vitality, represented by Amitabha's red consort, Pandaravasini. The fluidity of experience is provided by the moisture of water, represented by the consort of green Amoghasiddhi called Samayatara. The motility of phenomenal experience is provided by the ever-moving, kinetic nature of air, and the power of wind represented by Ratnasambhava's yellow consort, Mamaki. Vairochana's consort, Dhatishvari, the space element, is omitted from mention in this mandala in chapter 28, perhaps because she represents its emptiness!

Before leaving this section devoted to symbology visualized in Dzogchen, it should be noted that in the definitive textural elucidation of reality that is the *Tiklay Kunsel*, word choice is of paramount importance. Beside the revelations that evoke the vision of nondual reality, Vajradhara rationally defines his terms (e.g. in chapter 96), and provides synonyms and related vocabulary (e.g. in chapters 7, 9, 12 and 27), and he also explains them by metaphor and simile (e.g. in chapters 13 and 90). If metaphors and similes employ verbal symbols to juxtapose distinct ideas, through the very paradox that they induce the nature of mind tends to shine through, as in a Zen koan. Such resolution of duality may sometimes imply that the cultural, or tantric, specificity therein has been superseded and a technical knowledge of nonmeditation has been gained.

The Non-Gradual Approach

From the evidence of the *Tiklay Kunsel*, the conclusion is inescapable that Dzogchen belongs to Vajrayana Buddhism. The entire tantra is written employing a buddhist vocabulary and assumes that the reader has grounding in buddhist concepts and its metapsychology. No doubt remains that this nondual vision has been produced in a buddhist culture, and a suspicion arises that an education in that culture is a necessary grounding for Dzogchen. In regard to the eight lower buddhist approaches this suspicion is immediately allayed, however, by the assertion that the eight graduated paths are treated in terms of view, meditation, action and fruition merely to assert their redundancy. Since the views of the graduated path all retain concrete reference points due to biased interpretation of the two truths – relative and absolute – in chapter 36 the tantra says '[such] views do not facilitate recognition of self-sprung awareness and, therefore, are mistaken, perverse views. Corrupting reality and deviating from it, those views are the wishful thinking of desirous minds.' Thus it is made clear that their value is strictly limited, that the graduated path is not just provisional but in the uncompromising Dzogchen view fundamentally flawed, due to the insuperable obstacle of goal-orientation. It may be inferred, moreover, that the graduated path belongs to the plane of socially-engaged culture, which due to its glutinous nature constitutes part of the problem rather than the solution, and also that in the radical Dzogchen frame the benefit to oneself of cultivating the relativistic aspects of life – economic, political, social, academic, family, artistic or hedonistic – is nugatory.

It appears, then, that Dzogchen arises out of the mud of the lake of Vajrayana as a miraculously generated pristine lotus of enlightenment, and as such that it is possibly separable from Vajrayana Buddhism. The mud of the buddhist lake, by extension, may be analogous to the mud of all religion – Hindu, Christian, Taoist, Muslim, Shamanic and Jewish.

The *Tiklay Kunsel*, an explanatory tantra of Vajrayana Buddhism, however, can be understood as an archive of didactic information relating to the very highest buddhist approach. This approach is Nyingma Dzogchen atiyoga when viewed objectively – from the outside – but since from an internal perspective atiyoga consists in subjective practice as no-view and no-meditation, it cannot be called an ‘approach’. Rather, it is a definitive pointing out of buddha. What purpose, then, have the chapters of pithy paragraphs defining the eight Nyingma graduated paths under headings of view, meditation, conduct and fruition, for example? The text itself provides the answer: They constitute a provisional teaching that is the means to its own transcendence and may be considered, therefore, as a Trojan horse for definitive Dzogchen.

In the Dzogchen view, the distinction between provisional and definitive meaning is of crucial import; the definitive precept points directly at the nature of mind, facilitating experiential confirmation of it. Provisional precepts, on the contrary, provide a cause of change to the ambient conditions, change that may or may not be considered a desirable advance on the previous stance. Consider the distinction between provisional and definitive view, where for example, in the bodhisattva approach each of the ten stages to buddhahood is taught as superior to the antecedent stage, whereas in the Dzogchen view each stage is a definitive expression of the nature of mind and as such is identical to both what came before and what comes after, each immediately transcending itself. Further, the provisional precepts of the lower approaches are causal, designed to achieve an antidotal effect, a rebalanced condition, which allows a greater degree of light to shine through, or to alter the personality to a more socially amenable condition. The motivation is thus altruistic and designed to change the world for the better. To the contrary, Dzogchen, with nonaction as its defining attribute, is ultimately accepting, providing the definitive nondual view. The distinction between provisional and definitive meaning and expression defines the difference between the eight approaches and Dzogchen atiyoga. Thus Vajradhara declares in chapter 36, ‘I and my emanation shall relate the views of the eight

gradual approaches along with a critical overview that reveals the distinction between the provisional and definitive view.'

If such a distinction seems to be a poor excuse for including the analysis of the eight gradual approaches in the tantra, Vajradhara proceeds to introduce compassion as his motive, albeit relative compassion, compassion with an object. The object of compassion in this case is all other sentient beings, and his motivation is qualified by the codicil 'with hidden intent' – the hidden intent that is Dzogchen no-view and no-meditation. The hidden intent is accomplished by means of the critical overview revealing the identity of provisional and definitive, relative and absolute. On the surface, 'out of compassion' implies the allowance of goal-oriented practice to alleviate the pain of samsara and to ameliorate inexorable karmic effects. In the radical Dzogchen context, although this might appear to undermine the principle of nonaction and the assumption of the starting point as the goal, in the here and now even goal-oriented activity on the graduated path is susceptible to the realization of the nature of mind in a synchronicitous moment. In that moment of recognition, compassionate activity with an object becomes the ultimate aimless compassion of Dzogchen. In that moment, alleviation of the pain of those who are unable to recognize the nature of mind in this lifetime becomes the spontaneous response to universal necessity. For this reason the eight paths of sadhana practice are also included in the Dzogchen mandala.

Likewise, 'out of compassion' the graduated paths are taught, for example, to those who treat tantra as a method of attaining mystical states of union through sexual congress. For them Vajradhara allows the practice of uniting gender opposites in anuyoga, but here, still in the light of Maha Ati, to the extent that we lean towards surrendering to the sexual impulse and through it sate the need for oneness, ego-loss and bliss, to gain that end we admit a necessity for change through spiritual practice and allow deliberate action. With an open-ended approach to sexuality and sensual pleasure, however, the vast spaciousness of Dzogchen can surely be experienced synchronistically.

For those fascinated and pleased with visualization of buddha-archetypes, recitation of their mantras and liturgically orchestrated ritual worship, Vajradhara allows the practice of mahayoga. The samadhis and trances that are induced thereby may provide an illusion of nirvana, but it is only a temporal reflection, a momentary and relieving escape into a chimeric world of what could be while ignoring

what is. But the devout meditator lost in his world of spells and phantasies is also included in the radical Dzogchen mandala, which has *no* parameters whatsoever.

For those who believe that physical discipline, purity, and order are essential to enlightenment, Vajradhara allows outer tantric practice. Here the esoteric arts and sciences of the New Age – with some justification – find their home. But regardless of the degree of rigor, intensity and intelligence applied to it, or indeed the amount of intuition in a relaxed and spaced-out frame, although this discipline engages only the relative world of personality and lifestyle, Dzogchen is accessed in a sense of lightness and ornamentation.

For those who find that antisocial seclusion facilitates realization of the blissful emptiness of being, Vajradhara allows cantankerous hermits – who have only partial understanding – into the mandala. Self-realization arising spontaneously in an urban ghetto or in a forest retreat is a wonderful and amazing achievement. And although co-emergent with that sense of success may be a grouchy personality, Dzogchen and the nature of mind is present with the sense of dance and playfulness.

For those who believe that renunciation and incarceration in a monastery or retreat center is a lifestyle that produces conditions supportive of the realization of the nature of mind, and that cultivation of social virtue and the rejection of negative social behavior is the first step upon a ladder that reaches to a state called ‘buddahood’, Vajradhara is accommodating.

In short, every lifestyle, meditative practice or view is ‘abhorred’ by dharmakaya and immediately eliminated in an innate recognition of the nondual nature of all dualistic experience as elucidated in chapter 3. Here the ‘abhorrence’ implicit in dharmakaya implies an immediate dissolution of whatever dualistic perception is encountered. To the extent that dharmakaya is innate, in reality, no objectification of pleasure or pain, no thought or emotion, can ever survive its abhorrence.

The Bardo

‘Bardo’ is the name of the intermediate space-time of felt experience when delusory four-dimensional space-time (‘the natural bardo’) begins to give way to recognition of the nondual nature of mind

(‘bardo of dying’), when it is resolved in its nondual nature (‘bardo of reality’) and when it reverts to samsaric duality (‘bardo of becoming’).

Thus in a fourfold division of the bardo, firstly we have existence in samsara with experience of conventional space-time, where lies the possibility of a rainbow body, which is called ‘life’ (the natural bardo); secondly, the termination of life-force within the body that is the inevitable end of life, which is called ‘death’ (‘the bardo of dying’); thirdly, recognition of nonduality and the nature of mind after death which is called ‘the bardo of reality’; fourthly, the experience of waiting in limbo preceding return to the samsaric wheel of life, the return that is called ‘rebirth’ (the bardo of becoming or possibility’).

All this bardo experience arises out of the primal ground and dissolves back into it. Causal analysis of these states will inevitably obscure their noncausal reality, and result in a perception of them as a sequential flow; but existentially they are separate and distinct and it is in that perspective that they assume high significance in Dzogchen. Likewise, any apparent intellectually imposed causal relationship between elements of each bardo cloud the possibility of those different elements providing symbolic indications of integral visionary experience. With or without causal connection between them, the descriptions of the four bardos can provide a vague map for exploration of entheogenic experience.ⁱ

The bardos themselves are dealt with only cursorily, in chapter 84; but in succeeding chapters some aspects of bardo experience are thoroughly examined. First, in chapter 85 the difference between the relative mind – what we call here the intellect – and present awareness is explored; experiential knowledge of this distinction is crucial because so long as confidence in the intellect dominates and overrides the intuitive knowledge of the nature of mind, the bardo of reality will remain a hellish pandemonium and cacophony and there will be no release.

Release is the topic under which bardo experience is treated in successive chapters 87-89, describing the various types of release experienced by individuals of varying capacity. Confidence in release, it should be remembered, is Garab Dorje’s third incisive precept,

ⁱ Alpert and Leary’s *The Psychedelic Experience* published in 1963 has not been superseded (has it?).

predicated upon the first – recognition of the nature of mind – where confidence implies the certainty that release occurs spontaneously, naturally and effortlessly; here it occurs by itself whatever the individual's capacity. It is as if the several descriptions of release were all describing the same event except in different degrees of sophistication and discernment. However, the difficult chapter on The Four Alternatives, chapter 94 (difficult only for those without knowledge of buddhist logic), refutes the possibility of release or nonrelease and so on.

The Text and the Translation

The Tibetan title of *The Circle of Total Illumination* is *Thig le kun gsal chen po'i rgyud* (pronounced *Tiklay Kunsel chempi gyue*). The Sanskrit title is *Tilaka sarva kāla mahātantra nāma*. It is a Dzogchen explanatory tantra of the atiyoga class belonging to the Secret Precept Series. The title is capable of various translations. The literal translation, *The Circle of Total Illumination*, may refer to the text itself, which according to the description of its own purpose elucidates all tantras, or it may refer to the existential self-illuminating reality indicated by its title, a notion more aptly contained in the phrase *Everything Is Light*.

Dzogchen and Vajrayana

To address the topic of the origins of Dzogchen and the source of the Dzogchen tantras, we could usefully introduce what could be considered the principal difference between the great religions of Asia and the religions of the People of the Book – the zealous monotheists. The relevant distinction in this context is the recognition and conceptualization of reality (or God) as nondual in the former and its dualization and sometime anathematization in the latter. In the western Christian world, despite persecution and genocide, gnosticism constantly raises its head, while in eastern Orthodoxy it always had a covert acceptance. To the extent that the great religions of Asia and the people of Europe have understood nondual experience to be the ultimate existential stance, and that all human beings are endowed with the light of the mind, we may reach the conclusion that nondual experience is the ground of being and the source of all religion

'Nonduality' is to be understood in terms of the unitary experience of subjective and objective aspects of perception that devolves into the ultimate reality or nondual awareness of the here and now. Thus we begin with the propositions that an awareness of nonduality exists in all cultures and that some people everywhere fully recognize the nature of mind in every perception and these people are called mystics or yogins and yoginis.

To carry those assumptions into a discussion of the origin of Tibetan nondualism in a chronological, historical frame, Dzogchen may have had its genesis outside Buddhism – although no substantial evidence of its existence anywhere other than Tibet has been discovered. It became assimilated to Tibetan Buddhism only in the Empire period, because it was useful, useful for buddhists who had recognized the nature of mind, who had had the epiphany of nondual reality, and whose lives had been transformed by initiatory experience. Thereafter it became 'carried' by Vajrayana or Tantric Buddhism.

The crucial later development was the recognition of Dzogchen at the apex of buddhist attainment. Dzogchen, 'the great perfection', was no longer a mystical condition arisen spontaneously or synchronicitously in the heart/mind of susceptible people, but rather it was the reward at the end of long and strenuous path of spiritual activity in a mundane context. In other words, if ambitious priests or monks were sufficiently motivated on a relative level in virtuous activity and particularly mechanistic meditation, they would attain a nondual state, which was called Dzogchen. Dzogchen then became the carrot waved by the mundane priesthood before the noses of their followers and particularly their ambitious successors. The stick, of course, was the threat of rebirth and its inherent suffering on the wheel of life.

This brief overview of the development of Dzogchen ignores the questions that have exercised the intellect of scholars concerning its origins. What part did the pre-buddhist Bon of Zhangzhung play in the establishment of the nondual tradition? Had Orgyen (Oddiyana), the birthplace of Garab Dorje and Padmasambhava, developed a formal religious acknowledgement of nondual reality? Did the Bon already possess a form of Dzogchen when Bairotsana returned to Central Tibet with the Nyingma Tantras? Or did the shamanic Bon simply appropriate Dzogchen lock, stock and barrel, from the Buddhists? In the absence of textual material, answers to these questions must be mere conjecture.

The Nyingma Tantras

The Nyingma tradition regarding the source of their original tantras begins with the adiguru Garab Dorje, who, it is said, gathered eighty-four thousand verses of Dzogchen scripture in his Orgyen homeland a few decades after the parinirvana of Sakyamuni buddha. Garab Dorje taught them to his disciple Manjushrimitra who divided them into the three sections of mahayoga, anuyoga and atiyoga. Manjushrimitra taught them to Shri Singha who taught them to Bairotsana, the monk who had been sent down from Tibet to India by king Trisong Detsen, and who now took them back to Tibet. We are quite certain Bairotsana translated much of the Mind Series texts during the reign of Trisong Detsen and that the Indian savant Vimalamitra from Bengal translated the remainder of the Mind Series some years later. The origins of the Space and Secret Precept Series are less clear, although in many colophons – in the *Tiklay Kunsel* for example – Bairotsana is given as the translator. The institute of translation that eventually invested the Samye monastery engaged Indian panditas to work with Tibetan translators to translate the large corpus of buddhist texts that included many Dzogchen texts.

Thus the old Nyingma tradition has it that the tantras originated in the Indic literary sphere and were translated from Indic sources. The assumption is that the *Nyingma Gyuebum*, the compendium of the old tantras, maha, anu and ati, was completed by the end of the empire period. After the beginning of the second period of propagation of the dharma in Tibet, with the renaissance of the Nyingma school and the beginning of what could be called Tibetan historiography, legend and myth became history. We know that catalogues of the old tantras were made in the 12th century by Nyangrel Nyima Wozer's school and by the Zur family in Central Tibet. In the 14th century Ratnalingpa made the first comprehensive collection, which was edited and improved upon by Jigmelingpa in the 18th century. In 1982 the National Library of the Royal Government of Bhutan published a photo-offset edition of the collection kept by the Tsamdrak monastery and it is that compendium called the *Nyingma Gyuebum* that is the primary manuscript source of this translation.

But in general, the temporal origin of the Nyingma Tantras, in distinction to their existential source, is as unclear as Tibetan history. The Tibetan Yellow-Hat school has poured doubt upon their authenticity, asserting that they had no Indian, sanskritic antecedents. Contemporary western scholarship is still equivocal. Perhaps sanskritic

sources existed, but we have no knowledge of those original texts and most likely the Tibetan ‘translations’ were recensions of oral transmission. Certainly the Mind Series tantras translated by Bairotsana and Vimalamitra were extant in the eighth century empire period, the putative initial period of the propagation of Dzogchen in Tibet. But in the absence of hard evidence, Western scholarship has overturned the traditional view that the tantras originated with a historical Garab Dorje to be transmitted and organized by his disciple Manjushrimitra. The notion of a single source in either Sakyamuni Buddha or Rigdzin Garab Dorje with a single lineage with a didactic accent upon nondual mystic experience is rejected as apocryphal myth.

One western revisionist academic view is that the Mind Series tantras were written down in the 8th century by Tibetan masters and constitute early, pure, Dzogchen. The Space Series, and the Secret Precept Series, it is said, were written down by lamas between the 11th and 14th centuries under the influence of the ethos of the new tantras emanating from Nepal and Bengal, particularly the yogini tantras and the *Kalachakra Tantra*. The later Dzogchen tantras, it is suggested, have lost the radical flair of the Mind Series’ view. Incorporating many different meditation practices, such tantras produce the sense of a graduated path, or rather a path wherein graduation and immediacy are brought together.

To be more specific, this academic view disdains the generally accepted wisdom that the tantras were transmitted orally for hundreds of years until, at a time of threat or degradation, they were written down. It implies that Dzogchen had no Indic antecedents, that Dzogchen is a Tibetan innovation. Further, this view suggests that the *Nyingtik* lineages of atiyoga developed from and with the Space and Secret Precept tantras, that Longchenpa organized them in the *Vimala Nyingtik* and the *Khandro Nyingtik*, and that Jigmelingpa’s *Longchen Nyingtik* is the final product of that development. This view accords with the evident tendency of post-Great Fifth Dzogchen, as evinced in the *Longchen Nyingtik*, to introduce ‘preliminaries’ into atiyoga sadhana, and to include a variety of meditations such as those described in chapter 42. It is difficult to avoid the highly significant implication that as part of this development togal practices were added to the basic Dzogchen that is trekcho, or, alternatively, that togal was separated from trekcho, providing two integral stages, trekcho for the quietist, contemplative yogin, and togal for the more energetic adept.

Further, it may have been during the second period of propagation that the mahayoga and anuyoga (the creative and fulfillment phases of Vajrayana) were classified as Dzogchen. These innovations defined a graduated path, and if the imperative codicil to Dzogchen sadhana is that all spiritual practice must be recognized in its nondual essence, Dzogchen had found a niche in ordinary goal-oriented Vajrayana. In this form it was incorporated into the Nyingma monastic academies during the Yellow-Hat theocracy that in the three centuries leading up to the Chinese invasion of 1959 enforced its cultural ethos upon Tibet.

This view of the development of Dzogchen is seductive for those Dzogchen yogins who would revert to the earliest form of Dzogchen, to the Mind Series tantras, to inform their view and meditation. But the textural evidence to support this theory is so thin that the entire thesis must be relegated to wish fulfillment. The very few texts that have been dated from before the 11th century – and that includes the Dun Huang stash – are certainly insufficient upon which to base any generalization about the development of nascent Dzogchen. When speaking of Dun Huang, it must be remembered that it was a military outpost of Tibetan Buddhist culture thousands of miles from the central valleys where Bairotsana and Vimalamitra had taught, hardly representative of the entire culture. Besides, such academic views relying upon the evidence of extant texts ignore the traditional beliefs that embody higher didactic, soteriological, purpose – does any didactic purpose exist in western academia other than academic contention? Further, it is self-evident that textural sources and academic commentary are of secondary significance in tracing the history of a universal mystical existentialism, traced in the ‘perennial philosophy’. In the light of highly unreliable Tibetan historiography, the absence of textural material, the existence of conflicting beliefs in the various traditions, and even different approaches within the Nyingma school, any discussion about the history of Dzogchen in Tibet even after the 11th century is fanciful to tenuous.

A final word: If the *Tiklay Kunsel* were to be torn apart and the Mind Series essence that is presented in *Everything Is Light: The Epitome* understood as the original form of the tantra, the remainder of the text could be construed as additional material that was attached to the

ⁱ Forthcoming, to be published by Dzogchen Now! Books.

core to produce the final version of the text, or as it now stands, in the 11th /12th centuries.

Classification of the Text

Several versions of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*, the canon of the original works of the Nyingma School, are extant. The version edited by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche in 1975, called the Tinkye (*Gting skyes*) version, is divided into three sections: atiyoga, anuyoga and mahayoga. The atiyoga section is divided into three: Mind Series (*sems sde*), Space Series (*kelong sde*) and All-Inclusive (*phyi nang*). The *Tiklay Kunsel* is found in the last section among seventeen of the highest tantras. In the Tsamdrak (*Mtshams brag*) version, the text that I have relied upon primarily for this translation, the *Tiklay Kunsel* is located in the thirteenth of fourteen volumes of the atiyoga section. The colophon of the *Tiklay Kunsel* declares that it is an explanatory tantra of the Secret Precept Series of atiyoga.

The three principal forms of literary expression in Vajrayana are tantra (*rgyud*), agama – scriptural instruction (*lung*) and upadesha – secret precepts (*man ngag*). Tantras are the root revelations of Vajradhara or Samantabhadra that present categories of teaching in a textbook form, listing and defining. Tantras are like databases from which general instruction and specific precepts, and also liturgical meditation texts (*sadhanas*, *sgrub thabs*), may be drawn. The *Tiklay Kunsel* provides an excellent example of such a tantra. The agamas (*lung*) turn the tantras into logical idealized instructional treatises, a process that can be seen clearly, for example, in the distinction between the tantras of the *Spaciousness of Vajrasattva* (*Nam mkha' che*) and its agama (*lung*) the *Fifty Five Verses* (see Appendix 3), the latter a clear and practical elucidation of the former. The upadeshas, like the tantras in dialogue form, are personalized instruction in short pithy slokas and since predominantly they point at the nature of mind, they are ‘secret precepts’. These three – tantra, agama and upadesha – comprise the atiyoga section of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*.

No self-evident attributes distinguish the three classifications of texts called ‘the three series’. Various traditional commentators have imposed different threefold interpretations upon them. Perhaps Dudjom Rinpoche¹ expresses the mainstream view: ‘The Mind Series

¹ Dudjom Rinpoche 1991 p.391ff.

teaches that all experience is free from the necessity of improvement because it is inseparable from mind itself. The Space Series teaches that multifarious reality cannot be striven after and all antidotes are redundant because all forms are already perfectly gathered into Samantabhadri, the matrix of reality. The Secret Precept Series teaches that all attributes are free of both the necessity for improvement and any antidotal application because they are perfect as they stand.¹ At another time, Dudjom Rinpoche firstly connected Mind Series to realization of appearances as Mind, secondly Space Series to realization of emptiness, and thirdly Secret Precept to experience of the nondual nature of appearances¹ and emptiness.

Another frequently imposed differentiation is between tantras of view in the Mind Series, tantras of meditation instruction in the Space Series, and tantras of pith instruction on nonduality in the Secret Precept Series. Enlarging upon that classification, Chogyal Namkhai Norbu relates the three series to the adiguru Garab Dorje's three incisive precepts: Mind Series to 'recognition of mind's nature'; Space Series to 'familiarization with mind's nature'; and Secret Precept Series to 'confidence in release'.

Such differentiation undoubtedly has didactic significance, but a simpler and more acceptable explanation is that the three bodies of texts were derived from three lineages associated with three separate original locations appearing at different times, each having its own appropriate features. This assumption does not conflict Dudjom Rinpoche's assertion that the Mind Series appeals particularly to those attached to mind, that the Space Series appeals to those lost in space and the Secret Precept Series appeals to those with aversion to the graduated path.

Leaving behind this difficult issue of classification of the tantra within the frame of the three series, if we were to place the *Tiklay Kunsel* within the New Tantra system of father, mother and nondual tantra, although little evidence of the type of conduct mooted in the yogini tantras can be found, no literal interpretation of tantric precepts, no maithuna (sexual yoga) or tanagana (literally 'raping and killing'), no reliance upon dakinis (except as evoked in the Prologue and in chapter 91), no lower tantric magic, but rather a father tantra equilibrium with

¹ Please be aware that 'appearances' in a Buddhist context generally refers to the plural of generic form, rather than superficial manifestation.

an accent on verbal definition, logic and proof, it would have to be placed in the nondual class. The female deities of the mandala, however, are numbered one less than the male. But that is a subsidiary symptom of the nondual theme that runs throughout in an overarching and dominant manner. Nonduality is the mode and nonduality is the key.

In support of the hypothesis that Secret Precept Series texts were influenced by the New Tantra upsurge from India beginning at the end of the 11th century, and to provide a further definition of 'secret precept' (*man ngag*), note the inclusion of the 'mantric precepts' in some chapters of the *Tiklay Kunsel*, precepts that certainly have no place in radical Dzogchen. In addition, the prologue, with its list of wrathful dakinis fresh from the cremation ground, would indicate second-propagation tantric influence. The inclusion of the Vairochana mandala is strong evidence of mahayoga influence, although the purpose of its inclusion in the *Tiklay Kunsel* appears to be symbolic expression of an indescribable vision rather than an encouragement of the mahayoga practices of visualization and recitation. Likewise, emphasis upon the empowerments indicates nascent integration of this later Dzogchen with Vajrayana. Inclusion of chapters on the bardo is another indication of late and also terma influence – no reference to the bardos appears in early, Mind Series, tantras. Garab Dorje, Manjushrimitra, Shri Singha and Bairotsana are the names found in early Tibetan Dzogchen history that are mentioned herein.

In support of the proposition that the tantra belongs to a late period of composition, consider the elements of the *Longchen Nyingtik* that can be identified in incipient form in this tantra. No overt division into trekcho and togal phases of Dzogchen praxis can be found here, but the definition of unpremeditated non-meditation at the beginning of chapter 42 may be construed as trekcho precept and in the threefold training in meditation of chapter 42.3 the elements of togal shine through.¹ 'Constriction of energy channels' (although no mention of any posture has been found), 'the three gazes', 'the three skies', 'lamp of enlightened mind', 'the water lamp', 'precious *tsitta*', 'pixels of spaciousness', all provide material for the elaborate ritualized meditations of latter day Dzogchen.

¹ The precept at the end of chapter 75 appears to provide a tentative differentiation of the two: 'Reckoning from below, the cutting through is direct; looking from above, the view is uncrystalizing transparency.'

The pure 'early' Dzogchen view, however, can be filtered out of this tantra to provide a wonderful uncompromising introduction to nondual envisionment (see *Everything is Light: The Epitome*). No distinction therein is to be made between the trekcho phase (recognition) and the togal phase (fruition).

The geographic and cultural origins of the tantras may appear to be academic issues, but if the source of the *Nyingma Gyuebum* tantras is established, we know the origin of Dzogchen, and the argument between Buddhism and Bon regarding its genesis is then largely resolved. Again, that may be an academic issue. The source, the age, the language and the culture all add up to interesting peripheral temporal data. What looms as crucial is the integrity of the entire Dzogchen vision and, particularly, the validity of its view, the efficacy of its nonmeditation and the consistency of its adepts' conduct. Does Dzogchen transcend its cultural context? What is its current relevance? Is its nondual view optimally rigorous and uncompromising and impervious to intellectual dualization? Is its vision congruent with the experience of contemporary nondual adepts?

In conclusion, regarding the classification of the *Tiklay Kunsel*, the attributes of none of the three series fit it unequivocally. Insofar as the essential Mind Series tantras tend to be rigorous and uncompromising in their view, if a tantra that appears ostensibly to belong to the Mind Series leans towards the Secret Precept Series, it must fall within the purview of the latter. Further, the *Tiklay Kunsel* is replete with slokas that unite the dualism of form and emptiness, and awareness and spaciousness, and in that respect its classification as a Secret Precept text is validated.

Structure of the Text

A covert sectioning of the first fifty-seven chapters is provided by Vajradhara's nine samadhis, all of which, however, are to be discovered within the first forty chapters. The names of the samadhis provide the topic and source of Vajradhara's exposition.

First is the samadhi of all-inclusive envisionment, which is the totality-vision of the primal ground. In chapter 2, the mystical apogee of Dzogchen is described in terms of zero-appearance and zero-dimension, where zero-appearance is the ground of all vision, the essence of dharmadhatu, and zero-dimension is the primal ground, the

essence of dharmakaya, which in union arise out of the primal ground as nondual envisionment.

The second samadhi, chapters 3-5, is the samadhi of the characteristic of the primal ground, the samadhi of the very ground itself, which is well defined in chapter 3. In chapter 4, a secondary samadhi, the visionary state of metaphorical interpretation, evokes the primal ground by means of twenty-seven metaphors. It then reverts to the samadhi of the primal ground in order to provide an extensive definition in chapter 5, wherein Mahavajradhara, the Sixth, 'intrinsic presence' (*rang rig*) is included along with a list of words that are virtual synonyms, or aspects, of the envisionment of the ground.

The third samadhi, the samadhi of clear present awareness of the now, and chapter 6, define present awareness and its five aspects, while chapter 7 provides metaphors for it.

The fourth samadhi, and chapter 8, introduce compassionate creativity, the creativity of pure presence, as the five attributes of present awareness. In chapter 9, the definition of creativity is further elaborated: it manifests as the great elements, the body-mind aggregates, and all of illusory enchantment, and again in chapter 10 there is a definition and metaphors.

The fifth samadhi, the samadhi of ornamentation and display is defined with metaphors in chapters 11-13.

The sixth samadhi is the samadhi of structured perception or the samadhi of the origin of samsara contained in chapters 14-21, including the nature of delusion and its origin, samsara and kalpa, and the relationship between the great elements and sediments, and the three kalpas.

The seventh samadhi, chapters 22-35, embraces the sublime vision of trikaya, beginning with the manifestation of the form dimension within the formless, including the actuality of conversion, the thrones, the mandala circles, sambhogakaya and tulku.

The eighth samadhi, in chapters 37-56, explains the samadhi of inconceivable revelation through which the eight approaches are described. The common attributes of the eight approaches (and also the ninth – atiyoga) are defined in terms of conduct, meditation and view, fruition, and definition, in that order, but without an implied

necessity of one preceding the next. Vital content on nonmeditation and the Dzogchen view are treated therein. It concludes with chapters on The Supreme and Supremacy and on Deviation and Obscuration.

The ninth samadhi, beginning at chapter 57, the samadhi of the paramount secret, subsumes the remainder of the text. If 'the paramount secret' is taken to refer to tantra, then after the petition of Vajrapani to Vajradhara, and the excellences, chapters 57-61 treat qualities of tantra, agama (discursive instruction based upon the tantra) and upadesha (secret precept).

Chapters 62-70 first define tantra and then treat the ten necessary components of tantric practice, beginning with an extensive treatment of empowerment and continuing with samaya-commitment, the two mandalas (Mandala in chapter 66 and Selfless Activity in chapter 67), offering and yoga, mantra and mudra, and approach and accomplishment, all defined according to the Dzogchen view. These ten may be usefully compared with a Longchenpa list of ten: view, meditation, conduct, spiritual levels, samaya-commitment, path, ideal conduct, subtle realization, pristine awareness and the goal (see Keith Dowman 2010 p.81).

Chapters 74-82 consider further categories of tantra reappraised from the Dzogchen point of view: 'stages', 'paths' and 'perfections', and also 'hollows' and 'appearances'.

Chapters 84-95 treat the bardo (an inclusion that has no antecedent in Indian buddhist literature) and associated topics, focusing on the various modes of release. The highly significant seminal chapter 86 treating 'the fourfold pointing out' is inserted between bardo related topics without any apparent connection with the foregoing or following chapters. Chapter 90 lists questions and answers relating to release – an unusual didactic strategy – while chapters 91-92 define nirvana, the product of release. Chapter 94 on 'the four alternatives' approaches release through logical dialectic.

Chapter 95 touches upon the *nadashastra*, the science of relationship between sound and conventional meaning. If this relationship as presented appears at first glance to be arbitrarily devised, at least this chapter establishes the root of all sound as the unspoken vowel sound Á. Chapter 96 is a useful lexicon of miscellaneous technical terms used in the text, while chapter 97 comments upon the text itself.

The mantric precepts, called *man ngag*, upadesha, in the text, preface the chapters that introduce the samadhis, although in some chapters the mantras are placed unpredictably. The mantras themselves are composed in very poor 'Tibetan Sanskrit', a term that implies unconventional spelling, an absence of elision and grammar. However, overlooking the odd forms of the mantras, unlike the classical secret mantras composed of a string of sacred syllables these 'pith precepts' have some discursive meaning. These mantras are brought together in Appendix 4.

Any logical sequence of chapters, or groups of chapters, is sometimes difficult to discern. Chapters treating specific topics are not always in sequence; definition of topics that would logically appear before the revelation of the topic sometimes follows its exposition. These inconsistencies and the absence of formal structure may imply an absence of forethought in the composition of the tantra, as if the tantra were an aggregation of notes taken during oral expositions!

One particular chapter form appears throughout the text including a conventional buddhist logical analysis of a given topic, providing classifications of essence, semantic definition, category and metaphor. The chapters structured accordingly are indicated by 'Definition' in the chapter heading. Thus, for example, in the first eleven chapters, those headed 'The Primal Ground' (chapters 3 and 5), 'Present Awareness' (chapter 6), 'Creativity' (chapter 10) and 'Ornamentation and Display' (chapter 11) are structured in that manner. Other chapters are devoted to key words and synonyms (chapter 27 'Sambhogakaya: Key Words'; chapter 32 'Trikaya: Key Words'); metaphors (chapter 13 'Ornamentation and Display: Metaphors'); or lexicons (chapter 96 'Clarifying Definitions').

The Form of the Text

This tantra is presented in the form of a dialogue between Mahavajradhara and Vajrapani. Mahavajradhara, or simply Vajradhara, is often called The Sixth, the buddha added to the five sambhogakaya buddhas, the origin of them all. The Sixth is an adi-buddha, a primal buddha, and although his iconography is more elaborate he can be identified with Samantabhadra, who sometimes stands above him. Vajradhara's principal epithet throughout is 'Bhagawan', which means 'Beyond Victory', an epithet of Sakyamuni Buddha, for certainly Vajradhara is identified with the buddha of our era. The first words of the first chapter of this tantra echo the sutric phrase that introduces

texts believed to have been spoken originally by Sakyamuni Buddha: "Thus have we heard". Vajradhara is also repeatedly referred to as 'Teacher', an epithet commonly reserved for Sakyamuni, but this 'Teacher' is a mere personification of pure presence, dharmakaya and trikaya, and as such cannot be specified, substantiated or concretized.

Vajradhara responds to the questions of Guhyapati (Sangdak), Master of the Secret of Nonduality. But Guhyapati is also referred to by Vajradhara as Vajradhara and also as Vajrapani. In Tibetan, Chakna Dorje (Vajra-In-[honorific]Hand), Lakna Dorje (Vajra-In-Hand) and Dorje Dzin (Vajra-Bearer) are all translations of the Sanskrit name, Vajrapani, while Dorje Chang (Vajra Bearer) refers only to Vajradhara. Guhyapati's alternative names are applied apparently at random throughout the text. Incidentally, Guhyapati is also a name of Ganesha, the elephant-headed guardian of the gates of the mysteries in Indian mythology. Vajradhara also refers to Vajrapani as Vajrasattva; Vajradhara personifies dharmakaya while Vajrasattva belongs to sambhogakaya or nirmanakaya.

Vajrapani, one of the three bodhisattva-protectors of Mahayana Buddhism, is a wrathful bodhisattva belonging to the vajra family. Vajrapani is also the epithet of a lama who has achieved the status of tantric priest in both name and spirit. But Master of the Secret (Sangdak, Guhyapati) is his most common epithet and as such he is regarded as the compiler of the Nyingma scriptures and particularly compiler of the tantras of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*. In chapter 97 Vajrapani is identified as Garab Dorje or at least it is implied that the latter is an emanation of the former. Garab Dorje's name is adduced as a master of uncorrupted transcription of the oral teaching, written in lapis lazuli ink in original texts. Also, in the tantra's colophon, he is exhorted to transmit the tantra to his disciples.

The dialogue, then, is between personifications of pure presence and functional reflex, between a buddha personification and his bodhisattva emanation, between a fully perfected buddha and a disciple who aspires to clarification of that relationship, between the unitary field of nondual mind and a moment of self-expression of it, between a totality personification and a magical emanation of it.

The language of Vajradhara's instruction may be characterized as pith instruction to the extent that buddha-word can be broken down into single sentences with an integral meaning. For this reason alone, the tantra can be classified as 'secret precept', but more meaningfully

those precepts largely require nondual insight to be understood and are therefore 'self-secret'. Further, elements of the text are couched in a coded language (*sandhyabhasa*) that can also be called 'secret precept'; this includes primarily the instruction on meditation in chapter 42 and the narratives in chapters 14 and 85.

The Tertön and the Translators

According to the lineal tradition, Garab Dorje, a native of Orgyen, was the first Dzogchen tulku and the adiguru of the Dzogchen lineages. He collected eighty-four thousand Dzogchen verses together and as holder of the three lineages of transmission taught them to his disciple Manjushrimitra. According to one tradition, he lived shortly after Sakyamuni buddha; according to Western academic reckoning, he lived in the 7th century. Garab Dorje is mentioned in the *Tikelay Kunsel* as the recipient of the tantra from Vajrapani, and as a siddhamuni in the human realm. If Garab Dorje received the tantra from Vajrapani, he should be considered not only the adiguru of the lineage but also the first treasure finder (terton)! Regarding the disparity between the traditional Tibetan and the western academic belief in the centuries of his lifetime, the latter conceives of linear time, while in the traditional Dzogchen view the linear continuum is analogous to the skin of a fruit and the subjective perceiver to its juice. Discrepancy is inevitable. The traditional view holds some wisdom for the Dzogchen yogin; the materialist view provides data that allows an illusion of control.

Shri Singha (Pelgyi Senge) is one of the principal lineal masters in the Indian Dzogchen lineage, disciple of Manjushrimitra and guru of Bairotsana. Little verifiable biographical information exists regarding him in the oral, lineal, tradition, other than that he taught Bairotsana and provided him with at least some of the Secret Precept Series texts. Legend and revealed sources indicate that his homeland may have been on the Silk Route, and that he spent years in China, particularly at Wutai Shan, the mountain home of Manjushri. It is also entirely credible that he travelled to Orgyen and to Bodh Gaya and lived in those places of pilgrimage.

Bairotsana (Sanskrit: Vairochana) was one of the first five monks ordained by Shantarakshita in Tibet. He learned Sanskrit, travelled to India with Tsang Lekdrub, obtained tantras from Shri Singha, returned to Tibet and translated the tantras of the Mind and Secret Precept Series and taught at Tri Song Detsen's court. He was the first

of Tibetan Dzogchen adepts and perhaps the greatest. Certainly, the translations ascribed to him are pre-eminent, lucid and clear.

Linguistic Style of the Text

The text is written in a mixture of prose and verse. The lines of verse generally have four feet. Infrequently the lines extend to five feet or more. Sometimes pairs of lines (slokas) are employed; sometimes, double slokas comprise four line verses. Where slokas are not in evidence, sections are frequently concluded with repetition of the final consonant of the last word with ‘o’.

No evidence in spelling, vocabulary or the form of the text indicates that it had its origins during the empire period, during the first period of propagation. This lack of evidence is not conclusive as the work was almost certainly written down originally from an oral tradition and then rewritten or extensively edited at a later period, perhaps the eleventh century. Few words that can be considered dedicated Dzogchen expression can be identified herein.

In the colophon, as if in a *note bene*, the tantra declares itself written without particles or punctuation. This truth is only partial. Sufficient particles and inflections are included to facilitate understanding by anyone with knowledge of both the Tibetan language and the material. Many passages exist, however, where strings of nouns and adjectives would be better related if more particles had been included (particularly chapter 91).

Tiklay Kunsel as a Literary Source Book

The *Tiklay Kunsel* mentions seminal tantras and agamas of the highest tantric literature. If the *Tiklay Kunsel* dates from the eleventh or twelfth century, regardless of its origins in another literary form or as an orally transmitted tantra, the tantras mentioned in chapter 60 should be recognized as vital sources of inspiration at the beginning of the second period of propagation. The same should be said of the Mind Series tantras named in the text which are presumably part of Bairotsana’s translation. (See Appendix 3.)

The *Tiklay Kunsel* has been a constant source of reference down the centuries. For example, Longchenpa cited the *Tiklay Kunsel* at length in his auto commentary to the *Neluk Dzo* (*Gnas lugs mdzod*; see Keith Dowman, *Natural Perfection*, 2010), particularly from chapters 40

(‘Dzogchen View’) and 88 (‘Release’). See both the endnotes and Appendix 3 for detailed references.

Issues of Style

In definitive textural elucidation of the nature of mind such as this tantra, words are of paramount importance, and together with Vajradhara’s revelations pointing to a vision of nondual reality, the terms he uses are defined and also explained by metaphor and simile and elucidated by lists of synonyms and related vocabulary.

An elaborate glossary of English–Tibetan terms can be found at the back of the book, but any reader interested in the precise meaning of Dzogchen technical terms is strongly advised to turn to those pages *before* reading the translation so that a taste (*raas*) of the terminology and also a sense of the depth and complexity of meaning in Dzogchen can be comprehended.

Whereas the tantra in Tibetan consists mostly of verse, the translation is done mainly into prose, although important passages that lend themselves best to verse have been translated as verse. The prose translation allows interpretive elaboration of the sparse Tibetan verse (‘without particles or punctuation’), allowing the addition of implied adjectives and synonymous phrases that amplify comprehension.

To assist the reader, the chapter headings, given in Tibetan at the conclusion of each chapter, have been modified and essentialized in translation to reflect more precisely the chapter contents and placed at the head of the relevant chapter. The forms of some of the questions asked of Vajrapani have been edited to fit more precisely the answers in both placement and style. Also, see Appendix 1 for a rationalization of the upadesha ‘mantras’.

One small distinction: no difference exists in Tibetan between the meanings of ‘metaphor’ and ‘simile’, but a distinction has been introduced here. As the dictionary has it, a metaphor insists upon the identity of two incongruous things, while a simile only suggests similarity by use of prepositions such as ‘like’. In Tibetan, the tantra employs both constructions while using the same term to describe them (*dpe*).

Rather than suggest meanings for the many metaphors and similes introduced in this tantra, annotation has been avoided except where

the metaphor is technical and requires elaboration, such as 'like camphor' or 'like aconite'. Unelaborated, the metaphors become koans, or methods to nonverbal resolution.

This section's heading, Issues of Style, also embraces difficulties of English translation that are sometimes fudged by translators – particularly the translators who have specialized in Vajrayana texts – leaving readers to fall into errors of view that later are hard to expunge. To mirror Tibetan literary exposition of the Dzogchen view in English, the sense of immanent fruition should be implicit. The view, a description of reality as it is, rather than a prescription to rectify it, describes things as they are rather than how they should be. Since recognition of 'what is' requires no imperious or urgent command to 'do' anything, the imperative mood is used frugally in this Dzogchen translation.

Further, the meaning of some terms is altered from conventional Vajrayana to Dzogchen usage: for example, 'pure' (*dag pa*) or 'immaculate' (*rnam par dag pa*) here implies 'sunya', 'empty', and may be translated as such. The crucial buddhist word for 'emptiness' (*stong pa nyid*) sometimes appears in the tantra, but the word for 'pure' (*dag*) appears frequently. Purity is emptiness. Likewise, 'impurity' (*ma dag*) conveys essential substantiality or rather belief in the substantial existence of putative external entities.

Consider the Tibetan word *rang*, which is often translated as the reflexive 'self' when its meaning is much better expressed by 'intrinsic' or 'natural' or 'spontaneous'. *Rang dbang* translated as 'self-empowerment' is an absurdity when understood as empowerment of or by the self instead of 'intrinsic empowerment'. Empowerment can only be received in an absence of self. 'Self' in English has a strong sense of ego, an I, an *ens* and a substance (and subservience to the dakini is to be considered the most effective antidote). Again, no such entity as 'self-realized buddha' exists; all buddha is realized only by and as nonself. If any trace of self-nature in the body-mind remains, buddha is automatically excluded, the realization identified as that of a pratyekabuddha at best. Further, all buddha is realized without any internal witness, without any self-consciousness, without any person to say 'I am self-realized' or indeed 'I *am* realized.'

Self-evidently, the translation of *rang* as 'one's own' is open to the same criticism, particularly in the phrase '*rang rig*', which rendered as 'one's own awareness' or some such formulation, questions the

nonduality of *rig pa*. Pure presence (*rig pa*) cannot be possessed or owned by any one, nor cognized by any witness. Where 'self' is used reflexively it must always be understood as 'by itself' not 'of itself', as in 'self-sprung', where 'self' implies that 'it' is being pulled up by its own bootstraps, or an envisionment is being engineered intrinsically, by itself, not by 'the self' or by 'an other'.

Then, regarding the simile 'like the reflection of the moon in a pail of water': This common buddhist trope is not calculated to invoke the moon in the sky as the actuality of the reflection in water. The point of the simile is the unreality of the reflected image of the moon in water – its illusory nature. Introduction of the word 'reflection' and the inevitable inference of a 'real' source serve only to muddy the water, particularly when the 'reflection' has no 'real' source. The image in the pail is likened to 'self-envisionment', self-sprung out of the primal ground with no substantial nature and no extrinsic reference.

Consider this salutary story of a Zen monk afflicted by a demon that approached and abused the monk whenever his meditation was about to reach a point of breakthrough into nondual vision. Unable to resolve his sense of self, he became obsessed with the notion of killing the demon. The next time the demon appeared, he lunged at the apparition with a knife, but plunging the knife into its gut he found he had committed hara-kiri. What the monk saw outside was a reflection of his self. When we consider the environment a collection of separate substantial entities, 'an alien other', what we see 'out there' is a reflection of our own egoistic delusion; it is a shade of maya. Such recognition is important in the process of realization of the ultimate identity of subject and object. When the delusory distinction between inside and outside has been lost, in a natural envisionment of spaciousness the sublime vision in the now arises, and that can be described as an 'holistic light-seed', or as maya in nondual vision. This self-sprung envisionment leaves nothing extrinsic, nothing other, nothing alien, nothing separate. That is the universal self-envisionment that is revealed as the basic mystic vision of Vajradhara in chapter 1.

'The sublime vision in the now', mentioned above, is how in Dzogchen the word *dgongs pa* is rendered, and that is a definitive statement describing buddha mind. In the suppositional approaches, the word is done as 'enlightened intent' implying that there is an effect to be attained in consequence of a cause. Another word that can be translated differently in Dzogchen is *yon tan*, which in the lower

approaches means a 'quality'; in Dzogchen where all experience remains as pure potential it never reaches a stage of concrete definition. Regarding conversion (*'dul bya*), in Dzogchen there is no one nor no thing to convert. If the question 'Who or what is to be converted in the confusion of samsara' arises, it is answered by the 'The unitary field of awareness is being cognized at this moment as the product of conversion, and has not been and cannot become anything else.' 'What is to be recognized as envisionment in the primal ground?' And the answer must be, 'All experience is always self-envisioned in the primal ground.' In the nirmanakaya dimension no buddhas nor sentient beings exist, no buddhas who have attained the goal of enlightenment nor sentient beings who have not. No enlightened lama appears to magically convert wayward beings lost in samsara; the only possibility is a recognition of the essence of all phenomenal experience as perfect in itself. But that realization alone is sufficient to 'convert' or 'transform' sentient beings and that is the sole method at our disposal on the path of immediacy.

The danger here is the assumption of an 'I' who performs the action of conversion of another being. That assertive sense of an 'I' precludes any kind of Dzogchen conversion whatsoever. The conversion that one person does to another is better termed 'entrapment', or 'mental imprisonment within a belief system defined by a spiritual aristocracy that seeks to control and exploit'. This, surely, has been the mission of errant priests since time immemorial.

The translation of 'nonverbal or supra-verbal awareness' as 'wisdom', the wisdom that is a function of nonconceptual realization, results in a lack of clarity about the nature of mind. To believe that the dualistic mind's rational understanding of the secret of trikaya, for example, is anything but a trick of the demon of divine pride to prevent actual experience of it, leads to an inevitable sense of confinement in the cavern of karmic propensity. It is taught herein that the eight lower buddhist approaches employ mind as a vehicle, where 'mind' is relative mind, expressed in analytical and comparative thought-form. The ninth approach, atiyoga, which is no-approach, to the contrary, is concerned with pure awareness – present awareness – that has no form at all.

The *Tiklay Kunsel* is clear in its intention at the outset: it sets out to reflect the highest visions of Dzogchen tantra, not to inform the intellect of truths whereby enlightenment can be achieved. If truth is verbalized, it is the radiance of the creativity of pure presence that has

meaning; if the form of the moment is divorced from its radiance and given any extrinsic significance, it becomes a demonic intrusion from an alien environment, or the obtrusion of an underlying ego seeking to protect itself from dissolution in universal present awareness. Thus, mere intellectual understanding is not only an obstacle to present awareness; it is an error that leads us deeper into dualistic mire, and confines us there.

Protection

Despite its assertion that it is the key to all the tantras, all the tantras of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*, the *Tiklay Kunsel* does not lay any heavy stricture of entrustment and secrecy upon its readers. Perhaps this is due to the understanding of the meaning of 'secret' as something that by its very nature remains hidden in a place from which it can never be brought out into the common light of day for any curious intellect to peruse, as opposed to something that is hidden only for so long as its existence has not been revealed. Nevertheless, if anyone knowingly places it in the hands of someone who would abuse it, the Executioner has been primed to slay the transgressor. Fortunately, Tibetan sectarianism has not taken root in the West sufficiently to give this petition much relevance, and neither has the jealousy of the devotees of any lama curdled to the extent that texts or teaching are considered exclusive to that group. Perhaps the adjuration to protection is simply a heads up to sanctity or sanity.

The Circle of Total Illumination

Thig le kun gsal chen po'i rgyud

Homage

Homage to the point-instant of total illumination!
Homage to glorious omniscient buddha reality!

1. Prologue

In the magnificent palace of the Thirty-Three Gods, the Divine Mansion of Total Victory, on the summit of Mount Sumeru, Indra, lord of the gods, held council with the lesser gods gathered around him and conferred upon them this secret precept employed to ward off attack from the titanic anti-gods:

ADHAMKĀRĀ BUDDHA DHARMĀ PRASARA DUPA ĀPAYA Ā

Thus have we heard at one time:ⁱ The Bhagawan Mahavajradhara, Great Vajra-Being, Just As It Is In The Now', consummate in the sublime form of Mahavajradhara, 'Pure Nondual Mindstream', dwelt in the Immaculate Lotus Grove. There, in the Precious Divine Four-Door Mansion, adorned by the sun and the moon, resplendent with the internal light of present awareness, inside the great palace of present awareness, seated on a shining white lotus flower, Mahavajradhara of Intrinsic Presence sat enthroned. He sat surrounded by his mind retinue – dharmakaya – consisting of the sublime forms of fivefold present awareness,ⁱⁱ and by the intangible speech retinue – sambhogakaya – consisting of the five families, and

ⁱ In this phrase, authenticating the tantra, 'we' refers to Vajrapani, a bodhisattva reflex of Vajradhara, together with his retinue. In the body of the text the first person plural pronoun may be construed as the royal 'we', but, also, Mahavajradhara may be understood as a pantheon of buddha.

ⁱⁱ For 'fivefold awareness' and 'fivefold present awareness' (*ye shes lnga*) see chapters 6 and 7 and the Glossary of Numeral Terms (GNT).

by the six siddhamunis in their magical nirmanakaya emanation, together with the five pure awareness dakinis:ⁱ Purna Fully Pacifying, Vajra with the Ferocious Face, Lone Crest Ornament, Corpse-Eater Internal Butcher with her Garland of Skulls, and the Wind-Winged Double Vajra.¹ Further, Vajrapani – the retinue supplicating instruction – was surrounded by his own retinue and Blazing Vajra.

The entire assembly, led by the Master of the Secret, Vajrapani, circumambulated Bhagawan three times, and seating themselves in front of him, Vajrapani addressed him with these words: Bhagawan Vajradhara! The breath of your unreified all-inclusive present awareness stirring in the eight-sided mandalaⁱⁱ of your buddha mind, within the eight-petalled lotus mandala of your speech, the fivefold present awareness of your tongue has successively enunciated tantras that require explanation. Now, we beg you, give us a verbal lamp, ‘a circle of total illumination’, to shed its golden light of ultimate significance upon those tantras. As the ultimate key, may it unlock their hidden meaning, so that your retinue and future followers can read them and understand them.

Bhagawan responded: This is the secret precept, the single key that unlocks all treasures:

TANTRA SADU PRASARA KALA

Vajrapani, and all you retinue, listen to this ultimate thrill in your ear! For the sake of those gathered here and for future generations, we are now going to expound the key to all the tantras, *The Circle of Total Illumination*, which is an elucidation of the terminology of The Great Perfection, pith instruction on all approaches to enlightenment, the crux of all lineal instruction and the key points of all secret precept.

The first chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel: The Prologue.

ⁱ The awareness dakini is a female personification of a buddha aspect.

ⁱⁱ The octagonal mandala suggests the nirmanakaya throne of the eight bodhisattvas.

2. Spontaneous All-Inclusive Envisionment

In an oceanic, skylike, mirror-like plenum, on top of a universal smoothed-out turquoise mandala, in a precious nine-storied stupa, inside the mystic casket of present awareness, lies this secret precept:

Ā Ā RATNA DHARMAKAYĀ

Thus have we heard: the Bhagawan sat in the samadhi of spontaneous all-inclusive envisionment, and at that same time the Master of the Secret,¹ intuiting his heart vision, made this request: Bhagawan! Please show us your all-inclusive envisionment.

Bhagawan replied: Best Beloved, we shall describe to you the spontaneous all-inclusive envisionment that all the tantras reveal. Keep it unfailingly in your mind.

The zero-dimension awakens in zero-appearance.² The sole holistic sphere of dharmakaya blends with the undivided field of appearances into an elixir that shines like sunlight in the sky.

Master of the Secret! See in your mind precisely what we say right now. The field that is cognized by the zero-essence is the spaciousness of reality, the dharmadhatu. The dharmadhatu is an immaculate buddhafiield, without center or periphery, without top or bottom, without any spatial bias. It has neither multiplicity nor support. Undervalued, the dharmadhatu is mistakenly² reified and concretized; when it is sublimated it is transparent, and utterly unrestricted it is an unchanging matrix of unelaborated spaciousness.

That zero-dimension's nonconceptual impartial wisdom,³ its unrestricted present awareness, its uncaused spontaneity, its untouchable transparency, is beyond the reach of deliberate motivated action, beyond the possibility of rational evaluation and in its pristine inviolability it is immaculate.

¹ Guhyapati, Vajrapani: his secret is nonduality.

² The one, all-inclusive, existential dimension (*ngo bo nyid kyi sku*, *svabhavikakaya*), 'the dimension of the original face', appears within 'zero-appearance' (*ngo bo nyid kyi suang*) or 'apparent essence'.

³ Please note that 'wisdom' (*shes rab*) is to be identified generally in this text with present awareness (*ye shes*).

It has no root cause, is subject to no circumstantial conditioning and no possible recourse; it cannot change. It cannot be touched by ignorance, dogmatic assertion, atheistic denial, sloth or any emotional affect. It cannot be stained by eternalistic or nihilistic belief, by limiting belief in existence or nonexistence, by fixated dualistic materialism or any other dualistic argument.

‘Essence’ is so called because it refers to the nonreferential reality of all experience of samsara and nirvana. Also, it is that which is said to shine in the spaciousness of present awareness; it is a field of pure presence without differentiated points of reference, without any fragmentation of cognition. Pure presence pervades spaciousness; present awareness equalizes everything; all and everything is included in reality’s intrinsic awareness.

Best Beloved, whereas zero-appearance of the dharmadhatu together with the zero-dimension of dharmakaya are expressed and indicated as a dualism, as indicated above, the experiential reality is nondual. Both are subsumed by and contained in the ultimate peerless ‘interior hollow’.¹ This ultimate nonduality is dharmakaya’s sole holistic seed of light.

How can that be? The basis of an inconceivable field is itself inconceivable, and so no fixed concept can arise in pure presence – objectification and reification are precluded. The nondual subjective and objective aspects comprise the spontaneity of the self-envisioned field, which is invested by the clear light of present awareness.

The essence spun into elixir is the pure presence that is the nature of spaciousness. The essence of pure presence is spun into the elixir of the intrinsic radiance of fivefold present awareness, and the essence of that awareness is turned into the elixir of fivefold immanent quality. Best Beloved, the elixir of spun essence is the vision of present awareness that is like magical illusion.

As for the similes ‘like the sky’ and ‘like sunlight’, Best Beloved, zero-appearance (essence of dharmadhatu) is like the cloudless sky, while the zero-dimension (essence of dharmakaya) is like sunlight.

¹ See chapter 81 for an explanation of ‘hollow’.

In that way, Bhagawan related the nature of ultimate spaciousness to awareness of the interconnected universe.

The second chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the character of spontaneous all-inclusive envisionment.

3. The Primal Ground: Definition

Then the Bhagawan, Mahavajradhara, composed himself in the samadhi of the very ground itself.

The Master of the Secret asked him: Bhagawan! Please explain rationally the essence of the primal ground, its semantic definition,¹ its specific attribute, its types and its eliminations.

Then Bhagawan arose within his samadhi and replied: Best Beloved, the essence of the primal ground is nonduality. It is semantically defined as the source of everything, or as the container of both samsara and nirvana. Its defining characteristic is fivefold present awareness. The ground has three aspects: primal ground as present awareness; primal ground as authenticity; and primal ground as the secret taste of diversity.

Here are the eight ways in which aspects of space-time,³ adulterations of karmic proclivity, are eliminated in the primal ground:

As intrinsic awareness, the primal ground eliminates matter;
 As emptiness, it eliminates substantiality;
 Nondual, it eliminates dualistic perception;
 Self-sprung, it eliminates causes and conditions;
 As spontaneity, it eliminates all hope and fear;
 Immaculate, it eliminates all obscurations;
 With nonexistence in abeyance, it eliminates the nihilistic extreme;
 With existence in abeyance, it eliminates the eternalistic extreme.

Vajrapani, know this! The primal ground that is immaculate spaciousness reverts and eliminates even its own modes of presence,

¹ The term semantic definition (*nges tshig*) adverts to inference from common written contexts together with received instruction.

dissolving even the concordant eight fields of consciousness.ⁱ How does it dissolve them? Because neither increasing nor decreasing, neither coming nor going, it reverts the primal ground consciousness;ⁱⁱ because it has no sense of self, the primal ground reverts the afflictive intellect; because it has no duality of subject and object, the primal ground reverts discursive verbal consciousness; and because it is free of birth and dying the primal ground reverts the five senses.

Master of the Secret, the primal ground reverts compatible functions into emptiness, and this includes the immaculate sky with its colors, its spaciousness and its peaceful vibration.⁴

Great Being! The primal ground also reverts dead matter, which is irreconcilable with pure presence, releasing and dissolving what is reverted. The primal ground dissolves the four external and internal great elements, irreconcilable with emptiness, because they are not actually produced or existent.

Best Beloved, understand that this ultimate self-existent self-perfected reality reverts and dissolves *both* harmonious *and* irreconcilable phenomena, and *neither* harmonious *nor* irreconcilable phenomena.

The third chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the reality of the primal ground.

4. All-Inclusive Envisionment: Metaphors

Then Bhagawan Vajradhara entered the visionary state of metaphorical interpretation and the Master of the Secret asked him

ⁱ The fields of consciousness are of eye, ear, tongue, nose, body, thought, emotion and the universal ground, each including the other four body-mind aggregates.

ⁱⁱ The eighth consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam par shes pa*), the common consciousness in which samsara and nirvana are structured, the repository of karmic propensity and motivation, is sometimes interpretively called 'the store-consciousness'. This *kun gzhi rnam shes* is to be distinguished from the primal ground itself.

for appropriate similes illustrating the nature of the primal ground and its envisionment.

The Bhagawan replied: Listen, Vajrapani! Here are some similes and some symbols evoking spontaneous inclusive envisionment.

Like the ocean, it is unshakeable;
 Like space, it is empty and permeates everything;
 Like a crystal prism, it is unstained;
 Like a mirror and its image, it is unadulterated, pure and clear;
 Like a lotus flower, even at its full bloom it remains undefiled;
 Like a diamond it is immutable; like an elephant it is immovable;
 Like the earth, it is the ground of all;
 Like wish-fulfillment, it arises from an ephemeral blessing;
 Like sunlight, it is uncrystalizing clarity;
 Like a river, its flow is unstoppable;
 Like a great mountain, it has a strong foundation;
 Like the sun, it is a single source of multiple images;ⁱ
 Like the same image appearing in multiple water bubbles,
 It is a singularity manifesting multiplicity.

Reality appears in dharmakaya like sunlight shining in a mirror.

Reality suffuses dharmakaya like butter suffusing milk.

Pure presence abides in the nature of reality like sunlight in the sky.

Implicit, unthought, dharmakaya reality and its creativity are like the hasp and blade of a primitive razor.

Unadulterated perfection is like a gossamer silk brocade tent.

Diversity and nonduality are like a tree and its shadow.

The rising and falling of creativity in the primal ground is like foam on the waves.

A metaphor for reality ornamented by dharmakaya is golden flowers placed upon a turquoise mandala plate.

ⁱ The sun has multiple images only in the event of a different sun arising in each country.

A metaphor for present awareness as the intrinsic clarity of dharmakaya is a crystal prism with refracted light shining within it.

Trikayaⁱ is complete and perfect in the primal ground like the imperceptible radiance of sunlight.

The metaphors for essence, nature and expression are a peacock egg,ⁱⁱ sunlight and rain clouds in the sky.

Again, the primal ground is like a crystal prism.

The metaphor for the one taste of the faults of samsara and the qualities of nirvana is camphor.ⁱⁱⁱ

Metaphors for natural perfection and its self-envisionment are a butter lamp and a mirror.

Pure presence and present awareness are like gold and its golden color.

The previous simile refers particularly to spaciousness (dharmadhatu) and the zero dimension (dharmakaya).

Listen and absorb this deep precept! The basis of these twenty-seven metaphors is the Word;⁵ the illustration of their all-inclusive spontaneous envisionment is the glyph Á together with a vowel indicator adding specific semantic information and an added consonant finalizing the signification. The unity of these three semantic elements provides an analogous self-sprung signification and each single illustration is to be understood universally.⁶

The fourth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the synonyms of all-inclusive envisionment.

ⁱ The unitary primal ground comprises three 'dimensions' (trikaya, *sku gsum*): dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya.

ⁱⁱ The 'egg' perhaps refers to the 'pure potential' of the peacock's paisley-type display – the peacock egg is a dirty white color.

ⁱⁱⁱ Camphor (*ga pur*) is both a medicine and a poison. It alleviates pain by inducing a modicum of the pain it seeks to cure.

5. The Primal Ground: Extensive Definition

Then the Bhagawan, Mahavajradhara, became absorbed in the samadhi of the clear meaning of the primal ground.

The Master of the Secret said: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please give us the definitive extensive definition of 'the primal ground'.

The Teacher responded: The word 'ground' appears repeatedly in our tantras and agamas in many different contexts, but we here we provide a concise definition. Please take it to heart.

The 'primal ground' is the empty essence of all experience of samsara and nirvana, and is, therefore, called 'the zero-dimension'. Since the ground contains its self-envisionment, appearances are called 'zero-appearance'. The ubiquitous effulgence⁷ of the ground is unreified and unceasing, and it is, in that way, vast spontaneous self-envisionment. Free of what are conventionally described as samsara and nirvana, the primal ground is dharmakaya.⁸ Moreover, even when its qualities are expressed temporally as experience of samsara and nirvana, whereby the cause is denominated the effect, it is still called 'dharmakaya'.

Dharmakaya abhors ignorance and so-called 'dead matter'; the essence of immaculate, empty perception is simply presence. Insofar as it is beyond all causes and conditions, dharmakaya is 'self-sprung'. Never arising contingently, since it is identified with pure presence in the now, it is 'ever-present awareness'.

Because nothing extrinsic to self-envisionment exists, because appearances are all a grand universal display of self-envisionment, the immutable essence is known as 'the sole holistic light-seed. The sole holistic seed is called 'unique', 'universal' and 'unsurpassed' because nothing exists over and above it. It is called 'the very first' because nothing exists before it. It is called 'all-creating' because everything arises and shines out of it. It is called 'the primal ground' because it is the source of both samsara and nirvana.

The incessant unreified radiance of the essence, the primal ground, is ubiquitous transparency. Free of any obscuration, the primal ground is mirror-like awareness.

The empty reality of the field of appearances and empty unconditioned presence are an inseparable empty clarity. As the real

space of that transparent empty clarity, the two existential dimensionsⁱ shine without union or separation. That reality is indivisible spaciousness; it is Vajradhara.

Five sublime formsⁱⁱ with the zero-dimension as the sixth,
 Fivefold awareness with nonabiding present awareness as the sixth,
 The five sensory objects with emptiness as the sixth,
 The five families with the field of *Á* as the sixth,
 The five colored lights with the clear light of all as the sixth,
 The five great elements with elemental nature as the sixth,
 The five sensory objects with the field of reality as the sixth,
 The five afflictive emotions with wrath as the sixth,
 The six families of wandering beingsⁱⁱⁱ are all one
 Never crystalizing as any specific quality:
 Such is the sixfold Mahavajradhara.

When we understand the reality of all multifarious buddha of the form dimension arising and emerging through realization, we know Vajradhara as the primogenitor of all buddha.

By virtue of his stainless essence and the unreified ubiquitous effulgence of his present awareness, Vajradhara is above all and everything. Being the immutable unity of pure presence and its envisionment, he is unchanging light, and he is known as original buddha Samantabhadra, 'The All-Good'. Whatever diversity of qualities he displays, his essence remains undivided, all experience retaining the one taste of all-inclusive nonduality.

The radiant light of present awareness emanates within the intrinsic clarity of spacious reality. Since the five sublime forms of present awareness shine forth within the boundless celestial palace, it is called the 'vase-body' or 'vase dimension'.^{iv} It is the vase-body of youth. An inseparable unity of pure presence and awareness of the now, it is

ⁱ The two dimensions are dharmakaya and rupakaya, formless and form dimensions, respectively.

ⁱⁱ See GNT for 'five sublime forms', 'fivefold awareness', 'five sensory objects', 'five families', 'five colored lights', 'five great elements' and 'five afflictive emotions' etc.

ⁱⁱⁱ The six families, or kinds of wandering beings, are labeled gods, titans, human beings, animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings.

^{iv} The sublime vase-body of youth (*bum sku*) is the interior dimension of the light-seed. See Keith Dowman 2014, Appendix 4.

present awareness of unreified skillful means and the ultimate spaciousness of the reality of immutable wisdom.

Within the matrix of spacious reality lies pure presence, and within the matrix of pure presence lies the five-colored light of present awareness. Since the five sublime forms shine within the hollow of light, buddha is naturally present, spontaneously accomplished.

The hollow of intrinsic five-colored light lies within the essential spaciousness of indivisible phenomenal reality and dharmakaya. Since the fivefold sublime forms of compassionate essence abide in a nonspatial-nontemporal reality, it may be defined by the triad of essence, nature and compassion.

Vajrapani, fully absorb this! Everything that is said to exist conventionally is immaculate in its own nature, and that actuality is referred to as 'the spontaneous perfection of things'. Inasmuch as it is self-sprung awareness, inasmuch as it is the original, uncaused buddha, there can be no first or last buddha. Inasmuch as the clarity that transcends what is visible never crystalizes, it can be called 'one-eyed present awareness'. Regarding whatever dualisms appear to exist, such as eternalism and nihilism, existence and nonexistence, good and bad, large and small, high and low, subject and object, assertion and denial, purity and impurity, inside and outside, broad and narrow, loss and gain, acceptance and rejection, 'is' and 'is not', since two contrary aspects cannot exist simultaneously, surely everything is nondual in reality. Since no incongruity in direct perception is possible, all perceptions must be unitary.

Free of any obscuration, the ground is clear and transparent. Since all experience of samsara and nirvana is born of it, and occurs as it, it is the source. Unutterable and unimaginable, its expressions do not transcend its essential reality. Uncontrived, spontaneously present, it is totally authentic. Everything issuing from it, it is the sole cause. The spontaneous all-inclusive envisionment produced and proliferating in it, it is the seed. It is an authentic revelation of present awareness. Not containing any distortion or interference, it is utter purity. Creating everything in samsara and nirvana, it is a precious jewel.

Best Beloved, furthermore, see the ground in this way: When it manifests and becomes visible as a multiplicity, the primal ground, the unthought, concept-free, essence, is still the pure wisdom free of an actor and action. Since the essence of pure presence consists of the

utterly transparent alpha-purity of evanescent awareness, no concrete entity can ever possibly exist; the wide-open doorway of potential is the source of all experience, its essence completely unrestricted.

Vajrapani, wherever these words appear in the texts of the tantras and agamas we have revealed, you should know that they all refer to the primal ground. You should know that all these expressions, starting from 'the zero-dimension' up to 'the unrestricted', refer to the same actuality revealed in all the tantras and agamas just as we have explained their meanings here.

Moreover, if the threefold internal structural analysis is applied, every word will demonstrate the ground, every syllable providing it in the same way.⁹

After that, the Teacher explained some expressions synonymous with 'reality'.

Master of the Secret! You should know that whenever we use the phrase 'spontaneous all-embracing appearance', we mean manifest appearance as an uninterrupted field of appearances, while 'great', 'vast', 'all-inclusive', 'immense', all imply that appearance is uncreated, that nothing over and above it exists, and that it is more exalted than any partial appearance. Whenever we use 'self-envisionment', we refer to nondualistic perception in which the source of the envisionment is not different from the envisionment itself. Whenever we talk about 'utterly pure vision', we mean a vision that is free of multiplicity. Whenever we talk about 'reality', we refer to the unchanging field of appearances. Whenever we talk about 'spaciousness', we mean the unelaborated nature, the 'excluded middle';ⁱ which is undivided simplicity. When we use 'the matrix', we mean unchangeable emptiness, and partless, indivisible, space. Whenever we talk about 'the field of appearances', we mean the place where events occur or appear. When we say 'empty', we mean totally free from any attribute and any substance whatsoever.ⁱⁱ When we say 'vast' or 'infinite', we mean that the referent is nowhere confined and without perimeter or shape; encompassing all reality, it is the uncrystalizing base of

ⁱ Aristotle's excluded third proposition (after assertion and denial) is included here to emphasize the illogic of the ineffable.

ⁱⁱ 'Empty of all extrinsicality' (*gzhon stong*) expresses the Dzogchen and Taranatha schools view, as opposed to the 'intrinsically empty' (*rang stong*) of the madhyamika view.

emanation of all its multifarious appearances. We must know that the immaculate spaciousness of reality does not contain any residual elements of materiality; that without any trace of karmic propensity it is capable of allowing the light of present awareness to shine forth.

When we talk about ‘the lotus of blissful clarity’, we imply that no harm can be done to immaculate envisionment, since it is the ungraspable intrinsic clarity of the primal ground. When we talk about ‘the spaciousness of the excluded middle’,ⁱ we mean that spaciousness is devoid of all attributes of the four great elements. When we talk about ‘the immutable matrix’, we mean spacious reality without top or bottom.

The fifth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel indicates the reality of the primal ground and expressions relating to it.

6. Present Awareness: Definition

The crystal casket, unable to contain the turquoise mandala, the radiant light of the stupa shone outside as a secret precept shining as the five rainbow-goddesses:

ĀBITYA JÑĀNĀ PAÑCHA PRASARĀKĀLĀ DĀDU Ā HĀ DĀ

The Teacher, Vajrasattva, entered the samadhi of clear present awareness.

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan, you say that spontaneous all-inclusive envisionment is founded in present awareness of the now. Would you please elucidate the nature of this present awareness for following generations?

The Teacher, as pure presence, arose within his clear vision of awareness of the now and answered in this manner: Listen, Best Beloved! We shall explain briefly the significance of present awareness. Our explanation consists of three parts, essence, semantic

ⁱ This refers to ‘the spaciousness that is incapable of any definition’ (*spros bral gyi dbyings*).

definition and categories, together with an illustration of each type by an appropriate metaphor.

The essence of present awareness is unthought, concept-free, clarity. The present awareness of the intrinsically immaculate primal ground¹⁰ is clear transparency. In relation to trikaya, it is dharmakaya. In terms of pure presence, it is essence.¹

Best Beloved, the nature of present awareness is light, which in terms of trikaya is sambhogakaya, the inner formful dimension, and awareness of that is the awareness of the basis of attributes.

Likewise, since the manner of appearance of envisionment of present awareness is without outside and inside, it shines without any obscuration. Since it is utterly pure, it dissolves extreme belief in eternity. Since it is clear light, it dissolves extreme nihilistic concepts. Since its manner of appearance – its envisionment – is without outside and inside, its subjective and objective aspects are identical immaculate purity. That is the essence of present awareness.

As for the literal definition¹¹ of present awareness: It is so-called because it is authentic nonconceptual cognition of the here and now.

The various types of present awareness:

It is fundamentally inherent¹¹ inasmuch as all and everything in samsara and nirvana is envisioned by it as the magical transparency of unreified presence in the now.

It is awareness of spaciousness inasmuch as it abides in emptiness.

It is mirror-like awareness inasmuch as its unreified presence is emptiness.

Emptiness is pure presence and pure presence is emptiness; it is present awareness of sameness, inasmuch as emptiness is inseparable from presence.

¹ It was the inferred substantiality of this 'essence' (*ngo bo*) that incensed the Gelukpa academics. See. Dunjom Rinpoche 1991 p.91.

¹¹ 'Literal definition' (*nges tshig*) replaces 'semantic definition' (*nges tshig*) when a Tibetan etymological root is evident.

It is discriminating awareness inasmuch as nondual emptiness and presence are known intuitively as separate.

Since this unreified awareness of presence cannot be a concretely existing thing, but rather a wide-open door for every immanent quality, and since unobstructed creative expression occurs impartially, it is always all-accomplishing awareness.

Although its various aspects are indicated by different words, in reality awareness is not composed of separate parts and is, therefore, called nonspatial awareness.

Best Beloved, understand that as awareness of presence present awareness is our own intrinsic presence.

Inasmuch as no actor or agent influences awareness, it is self-sprung. Keeping that definition in mind, that awareness is present awareness of buddha mind.

These are the metaphors for present awareness:

The metaphor for awareness of the primal ground is the precious earth in which everything grows.

The metaphor for present awareness of spaciousness is the sky.

The metaphor for mirror-like awareness is pellucid still water or a clear highly polished mirror.

Metaphors for awareness of sameness are congruous diagrams¹² of past, present and future.

The metaphor for nondual awareness is gold and its yellowness.

The metaphor for discriminating awareness is stars shining in a lake.

The metaphor for all-accomplishing awareness is the wind and the sun.

The metaphor for unthought, concept-free, present awareness is the reflection of the moon in water.

The metaphor for intrinsic awareness of presence is the crystal and its refracted light.

The metaphor for self-sprung awareness is the vajra.

The metaphor for present awareness of buddha mind is the royal seal.

The sixth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals a summary of present awareness.

7. Present Awareness: Key Words

Then the Teacher spoke again: In all the tantras and agamas we have given, whenever we talk about ‘the source of everything’, we refer to awareness of the primal ground.¹³

When we say ‘intangible emptiness’, we imply awareness of spaciousness.

When we call it ‘noncrystalizing’ or ‘unreified’, we imply mirror-like awareness.

When we call it ‘nondual’, we imply awareness of sameness.

When we talk about it as ‘unadulterated perfection’, the capacity for clear distinction is being referred to, and thus ‘discriminating awareness’.

When we say ‘nowhere obstructed’, all-accomplishing awareness is referred to.

When we call it ‘free of extremes’, we imply unsupported all-inclusive awareness.

When we talk about the ‘clear light of pure presence’, or the ‘awareness of presence’, we refer to spontaneous all-inclusive awareness of presence.

When we call it ‘unchanging’ or ‘immutable’, and ‘uncompounded’, ‘unconditioned’ or ‘unconditional’, and liken it to a vajra, we imply spontaneous all-inclusive, self-sprung awareness.

‘Unassailable’, ‘invariable’, ‘inalienable’ and ‘inescapable’ describe buddha mind’s fruition.

The seventh chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel lists words and phrases that describe present awareness.

8. Pure Presence: Creativity

The secret precept asserting no difference between the sun and sunlight:

BHAIISHAR RATNAKALA PRASARDHUUDU

Then Bhagawan became absorbed in the sublime vision of compassionate creativity. The Master of the Secret, sensing his vision, made this request: Bhagawan, please explain how present awareness appears as the creativity of pure presence in the all-inclusive dharmakaya!

The Teacher responded:

Transparent pure presence, without substance, is indivisible, intangible emptiness.

The sugata, nowhere obstructed, shines as fivefold present awareness.

The intrinsic radiance of the awareness of spacious reality shines as a blue light in emptiness.

The intrinsic radiance of mirror-like awareness shines white in unimpeded space.

The intrinsic radiance of awareness of sameness shines yellow in that undifferentiated space.

The intrinsic radiance of discriminating awareness shines red in the real space of wisdom.

The intrinsic radiance of all-accomplishing awareness shines green in the unconfined matrix.

Shining forth within the matrix of spacious reality, all five emanate as the light of present awareness.

Through realization light appears

As inseparable sublime form and present awareness;

Unrealized, it manifests concretely

As the duality of the world and its life forms.

Just as in a clear mirror an image is truly reflected,

The mirror unaffected by those reflections,

So in dharmakaya, the dimension of pure presence,

An unreified variety of buddha qualities arise,

Yet remain as a singular intrinsic presence devoid of multiplicity;

At all times and in all places it remains the same immaterial purity,
While the two form dimensions are pure, unreflected, visions.

*The eighth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the creative expression
of pure presence and immaculate creativity.*

9. The Creativity of Light-Seed

Then the Master of the Secret humbly asked the Teacher: Bhagawan,
please tell us how the word 'creativity' is used.

The Teacher responded: In all the tantras and agamas we have given,
'creativity' is used as indicated here:

The creativity of presence displays fivefold awareness,
The creativity of awareness, the five-colored lights;
The creativity of the lights reveals the five great elements,
Which are separately manifest.
Differentiating 'inside' from 'outside'
Here is outer and inner light-seed creativity.¹⁴

Clouds, mist and vapor occur as the creativity of space,
Which allows multifarious space-time extension;
Rolling thunder occurs as the creativity of air,
Which provides movement and motility;
Flowing streams are the creativity of water,
Which provides humidity and liquidity.
A multiplicity of images is the creativity of earth,
Which provides support, solidity and stability.
Heat and combustion are the creativity of fire,
Which provides maturation and completion.
With the aggregation of these five great elements
Plants, trees, forests, herbs, flowers, crops and fruits appear:
That is all external light-seed creativity.

Then the internal creativity of light-seed:
Pure white light appears as flesh and bone;
Pure yellow light appears as pus or lymph,
Which coagulates in water and blood;
Red light manifests as heat;
Green light as internal hollows;
And blue light as accommodating space:
The form aggregate manifests in that way.

Thereby the five aggregates and poisons¹ manifest,
 The sense organs and consciousness manifest the objective field:
 Appearances arising spontaneously from five-colored light,
 Manifesting as such, the colors are 'the great elements'.

Nothing arising extraneously, they are 'self-sprung',
 'Self-sprung elemental qualities';
 Arising like that, they arise by themselves,
 'Naturally arising, immanent qualities'.

Everything arising interdependently,
 The multiplicity composed of different elements,
 Manifesting as pure presence, it appears like this:
 Like the five sublime forms and the five objective fields
 Like yab-yum bodhisattva couples,
 Like iconic enactmentⁱⁱ of gnostic compassion,ⁱⁱⁱ
 All congruent but multifarious activity.

Such is maya – illusory enchantment,
 Simply lightform without substance,
 'Implicit unthought clarity',
 Clarity that has no intrinsic nature:
 Everything is spontaneously-dawning self-envisionment.

The ninth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the expressions that elucidate creativity.

10. Creativity: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Teacher, you have deep compassion, so please teach us the essence of creativity. Please

¹ The five poisons are the five afflictive emotions.

ⁱⁱ For the five sublime forms and their consorts and the eight bodhisattva yab-yum couples see Appendix 1.

ⁱⁱⁱ The compassion (*thugs rje*) that is identical to present awareness, compassion without an object (even a totality) and without a subject (without a sense of I, or of 'a doer' of compassionate activity), is identified herein where necessary by the qualifier 'gnostic'. 'Gnostic compassion', which is free of subject, object, and all conceptual superimpositions and fragmentations is the self-sprung spontaneous response of body, speech and mind to every situation.

tell us how it is defined, how it is classified, and how is it expressed metaphorically.

The Teacher responded: The essence of creativity is noncrystallization. It is defined as 'the creative potency of the elements'.

Regarding its categories: It is samsaric when it is envisioned without pure presence, or as nirvanic when it is envisioned with presence.

Creativity is illustrated by the following similes: it is like the deviant perception of a single sun as many suns;¹ it is like sunlight that is never stopped; it is like aconite;² like camphor; and like lightening.

The tenth chapter of the Tiklay Kunsel consists of a brief elucidation of creativity.

11. Ornamentation and Display: Definition

The secret precept upon inserting a turquoise jewel into a golden ring:

BHA ĀTĀ AÑKĀLĀ AHAM.

Then Bhagawan became absorbed in the samadhi of ornamentation and display and the Master of the Secret made this request: Teacher, Vajradhara! Please explain how the diversity of multifarious envisioned creativity becomes ornamentation and display.

The Teacher responded: The essence, semantic definition and categories of ornamentation are explained under the same rubric, and display is taught likewise.

The essence of ornamentation may be inferred from its classification. Its literal definition is 'a beautiful adornment'. Its classification is twofold: reality-ornamentation and dharmakaya-ornamentation. Reality-ornamentation is trikaya's three existential dimensions; dharmakaya ornamentation consists of the two dimensions of form.

¹ Is this done by pressing the eyeballs or by assuming that a different sun rises in each country?

² Black aconite is a virulent poison (*btsan dug*), which in small doses possesses valuable anesthetic properties.

The specific attributes of each of the five colors, therefore, are said to be both types of ornamentation. The metaphor 'gold inlaid with turquoise' describes that relationship'.

As to the semantic definitions, regarding the subtle distinctions in meaning of 'reality', pure reality is ornamented by dharmakaya and vacuous emptiness is beautified by clarity. Dharmakaya is ornamented by present awareness of the now; immanent qualities are beautified in their noncrystalization. Present awareness of the now is ornamented by compassion; the six kinds of wandering mind are beautiful because they are pure as they stand. Thus, ornamentation implies beauty.

Now, to indicate the meaning of 'display', we teach that the essence of display is intangible nondual union. Why is it called display? It arises spontaneously as natural enjoyment. To expand its definition deductively, it is of two types: firstly, the display of pure reality, and, secondly, the continuum of samsaric display.

Pure reality-display occurs in its pure potential within uncontrived reality and imperturbable space. It arises in the pristine sky as the radiant brilliance of the four great elements. Such envisionment is cognized as utterly insubstantial evanescence arising as uncrystalizing ubiquitous effulgence.

'The continuous display of samsara in one's own mind' includes all external outer world experience as well as internal inner world experience and is subsumed under 'the dimension of envisioned form' or 'buddha-body', which is all as unreal as the appearance of the moon on the surface of water. All sound and speech is buddha speech, which like an echo lacks any intrinsic nature. Memories and thoughts are buddha mind, which like drawings in water cannot exist as constant elements in the continuum of our own mind. Thus, all forms are the display of buddha body in the dimension of form; all sounds are the display of buddha speech; and all thought is the display of buddha mind. Failing to realize that, what is grasped at as the attributes of our own mind, something perceived as substantially specific, is what is called 'samsaric display'.

To an adept who has realization, all the multifarious diversity of manifest ornamentation and display, like a conjuror's illusion, is apparent yet has no substance. To the adept, dharmakaya and spacious reality are the invisible intrinsic nature. With his realization of the nonexistence of existence, the notion of concreteness is outshone;

with his realization of the existence of nonexistence, pure presence attains primacy. That is a fourfold expression of ornamentation.

Master of the Secret, wherever the words 'ornamentation' and 'display'¹⁵ appear they should be understood according to what is said here in this *Circle of Total Illumination*.

The eleventh chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains ornamentation and display.

12. Ornamentation and Display: Key Words

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Compassionate Bhagawan, please tell us the expressions relating to ornamentation and display.

The Teacher responded: In all the tantras and agamas we have given, wherever you find the expression 'dharmakaya is found within experience of phenomena', it is to be understood that reality is ornamented by dharmakaya.

Wherever we talk about the five attributes of pure presence, implying fivefold present awareness, or its fivefold radiance, we are referring to the ornamentation of dharmakaya by present awareness.

When we talk about the fivefold present awareness as light, its types, colors and shapes, we are explaining how gnostic compassion ornaments awareness.

Creativity, display and ornamentation, and iconic conduct are progressive stages of manifestation, which appear in many ways. Inspired bravery, beauty and sorrow, incessant change, inspiration and strength, visible structured decoration, agama teaching as adornment, upadesha secret precept as adornment: in brief, there are many different words and expressions that act as descriptive keys to ornamentation and display.

The twelfth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals a summary of expressions relating to ornamentation and display.

13. Ornamentation and Display: Metaphors

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan, please, through your skill in means, give us the metaphors that illustrate ornamentation and display.

The Teacher responded: Firstly, clear and bright sunlight suffusing the sky, and, secondly, the turquoise inlay of a golden jewel, are the two metaphors illustrating the ornamentation of reality by dharmakaya.

The ornamentation of dharmakaya by present awareness is illustrated by the metaphor of the five-colored 'egg'¹ of the peacock and also the unreified, unimpeded, five-colored light within a crystal prism. When appropriate conditions are met, the light of the crystal is projected outwardly. When the chick has developed within the egg, it hatches.

The sun's radiation of light illustrates ornamentation of pure present awareness by compassion.

The rising of spume and the falling back of the spray into the ocean, and also the illusory appearance of multifarious forms devised by a conjuror, illustrate the rise and fall of the incessant display of immanent potential.

This has been a selection from many metaphors,

The thirteenth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the metaphors of ornamentation and display.

14. Delusion: Its Basis

Once upon a time, in a fabulous country, in a city called Radiant Blissful Lotus, reigned a king named Transparent Gem who possessed an enormous treasure chest full of precious jewels. Once, when he went travelling to govern his kingdom, he met an old woman with cataracts in her eyes. While the hag beguiled the king, five thieves stole

¹ This appears to refer to the 'egg' of the paisley design of the peacock's fan (the peahen's egg has a whitish color).

the treasure chest. They sold the jewels to six stupid people in six low caste towns. The six stupid people neglected to care for the jewels, because they did not know what to do with them.

The king was sad and perplexed until an idler came to him and told him that the jewels had been stolen by five male thieves who had sold them to people in low caste towns. This story made the king angry and aggressive. He had the old lady killed, conquered the six towns, executed the six buyers and sold the six thieves into slavery. Finding the jewels, he regained his country. This is the secret mantric remedy:

BAJRA AHAM RATNA JÑĀNA PAÑCHA PRASARA A HUM TI

Then the Bhagawan Vajradhara became absorbed in the samadhi of structured perception.

And the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please tell us how the creativity and display, which you have already defined, appear as the delusive, dualistic ignorance that characterizes diminished presence, and how the mental continuum of samsaric display becomes delusory.

The Teacher responded: Best Beloved, listen well! The unchanging ground is buddha in the now. That buddha is Bhagawan Mahavajradhara, who was never deluded, cannot be deluded now, and cannot possibly be deluded in the future. The ground, just like the sun itself, can never be darkened, and just like a crystal prism shining regardless of the prevailing conditions, refracting in its empty purity, in its very self it remains untouched. Likewise, in nonconceptual, impartial wisdom,¹ in the lord buddha complete and perfect in the primal ground, delusive proclivities are pure from the first – alpha-pure. To say that buddha is deluded is nonsense.

However, in the absence of realization of the ground, just as it may seem that although one single sun exists it is a different sun that appears in different countries, so although one intrinsic pure presence exists, in the duality of samsara and nirvana multiplicity seems to arise. Similarly, just as camphor is a single substance yet can act as both medicine and poison, so in the comprehensive appearance of the nondual ground, nothing stirring within that buddha reality, quality is

¹ Such wisdom is 'without spatial bias', 'without falling into partiality', 'without points of reference' (*phyogs lhung med pa'i shes rab*).

naturally immanent; yet when realization of the ground is deluded, that same potential manifests as a multiplicity of imperfections. Only with realization of the ground as buddha is the very essence of perceived imperfection unconfined as immanent quality.

Now, as an extensive definition of the nature of delusion, we shall teach the ground of delusion, its cause, time of arising, conditions and the actual delusory process. Please attend closely!

Primarily, the ground of delusion has three aspects: the nature of phenomena as the ground of the delusive field of appearances; pure presence as the ground of the delusive subjective mind; and five-colored light as the ground of the delusive seemingly physical aspect.

The delusory ground of the field of appearances: First, it is the empty nature of phenomena lacking any awareness; then, in the middle, it arises as fivefold present awareness; finally, as signs of fixation-tendency, the 'sediments' therein become apparent although nonexistent.¹ That is the teaching on the delusory ground of the field of appearances.

Now, the explanation of the delusive ground of the subjective mind: First, indeterminable presence stirs; then grasping at the radiance of presence the perceiver is conceived; and finally, through the process of mental causation, many discursive thoughts arise. That is the teaching on the delusory ground of the mind.

And then the explanation of the delusive ground of the body and matter: First, the body arises in the matrix of pure presence; in the middle, it arises in the matrix of phenomenal reality; and finally, due to conditioning, the material form-aggregate appears. That is the teaching on the delusive ground of the body.

Master of the Secret, listen well! We are now going to tell you why those three notions of the ground are reasonable. The nature of phenomena as the delusory ground of the field of appearances is reasonable because without internal presence things seem to be dead matter. Pure presence as the basis of mental delusion is admissible because both are similar in being just awareness. Five-colored light as the ground of delusion of the body is reasonable because colored light

¹ 'Existent' in buddhist jargon implies a substantial essence; illusion is apparent but nonexistent.

and materiality are similar in possessing color and shape; the difference between the primal ground and the actual object of deluded perception is taught to be one of relative subtlety and coarseness.

Now, note well the terms that are relevant to this explanation: 'delusion', 'nature of phenomena', 'reality' 'pure presence', 'sunlight', 'kalpa', 'the first', 'the past' and 'the matrix of the future'.

Moreover, before me
Sentient beings do not exist.
Before sentient beings
The five great elements rule the now.
Before the great elements
The all-embracing sky rules the now.
Before the sky
Spacious reality rules the now;
In the vast matrix of spacious reality,
The five greats¹ are immaculate,
And as the essence of those five
Am I myself, the original one –
In a hundred thousand trillion kalpas,
Nobody appears before me.

Thus, to summarize what I have said before, the threefold underlying structure eliminates the delusory ground from articulation.¹⁶

Best Beloved, what we have already taught in detail in the chapter on the all-inclusive primal ground we shall not explain here.

The fourteenth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals how the immaculate ground is free of delusion and how delusion is grounded in qualitative manifestation.

15. Delusion: Cause and Occasion

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please tell us what is the cause and occasion of delusion.

¹ The 'five greats' are the five sublime forms and 'I' is the nondual unity.

The Teacher responded: The cause of delusion is the ignorance that is both innate and conceptual. We shall explain the meaning of these terms now, defining their essence, providing a semantic definition and the types of ignorance with metaphors.

Best Beloved, ignorance is essentially stupidity and believing in what has no substantial existence.ⁱ

The semantic definition of ignorance is ‘confusion about reality’ or ‘failure to comprehend reality’, or ‘the ignoring of reality’.

The types of ignorance are twofold, innate ignorance and conceptual ignorance.ⁱⁱ

Regarding innate ignorance, the question is ‘from what?’, and, ‘what?’ and ‘together with what?’

Best Beloved, the question ‘From what?’ is answered by ‘Pure presence apprehending the ground’. ‘What is innate?’ and ‘In what is it innate?’ is answered by ‘Ignorance’ and ‘Awareness of the now’.

So if you ask ‘Who is ignorant of what?’, the answer is that he who is inherently a body of light is ignorant of his similarity with his image in a mirror. That is why it is called ‘innate ignorance’.

From moment to moment, conceptual ignorance turns the fluid field of appearances into something seemingly concrete; this transformation is illustrated by the simile ‘like the murder of an old blind woman’.

Best Beloved! The product of conceptual ignorance has no real existence; it is totally delusive. Two similes illustrate its nonexistence: It is nonexistent like the projection of an aggressive human being upon a scarecrow so long as misidentification of the scarecrow lasts, and it is nonexistent like the delusions of paranoid dementia. It is also like a coiled rope that in twilight is mistaken for a snake. In these cases, what is apparent is not actually present; the perception is not the actuality.

ⁱ Alternatively, this is ‘misplaced concreteness’ or ‘reification of what is absent’ (*ma yin pa la ’dzin pa*).

ⁱⁱ ‘Ignorance’ (*ma rig pa*) is literally, ‘lack of pure presence’ or ‘diminished pure presence’.

Best Beloved, ignorance functions like that: through diminished presence what is unreal appears to exist.

Where does the ignorance come from? When the confines of the body are strictly delimited, wisdom's creative expression is curtailed and its cognitive function remains dormant. At that time, the five-light radiance of present awareness in the visual field cannot be recollected.

The field of appearances is a fluid noncrystalizing vision arising in Samantabhadra's motionless space, and the essence of that space is the source of present awareness; but egoism associates the self with what shines pristine in the now, and that association precludes realization of spontaneous self-envisionment. Best Beloved, that is the reason for diminished presence.

Thus, whenever we speak of 'ignorance' or 'diminished presence', 'stupidity', 'unknowing', 'blindness', 'nonrealization', 'delusion', and 'misconception' and so on, we are referring to the delusory experienceⁱ that is ignorance, which is described above.

And then, Master of the Secret, the occasion for delusion occurs when intrinsic awareness arises in the field of appearances and is fixated.ⁱⁱ

The fifteenth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the cause and occasion of delusion.

16. Delusion: Its Causes and Conditions

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara, please speak about the causal conditions of delusion.

The Teacher responded: Best Beloved, we shall explain it; take heed! We shall explain the primary cause and the causal conditions, the subjective conditions and the objective conditions, as well as the cooperating conditions.

ⁱ Hallucination (*nyams*).

ⁱⁱ Alternatively: 'becomes subject to its own apprehension', or 'becomes reified' (*'dzin pa skyes pa*).

To elucidate the root cause and the causal conditions of delusion: The primary cause is indeterminate presence, and its causal condition is the empty purity of reality. That pure indeterminate presence, which is the specific attribute of dharmakaya, is defined as emptiness with its inseparable, unobstructed wisdom. The colors blue, white, yellow, red and green are its separate and various attributes and are discovered in the mental continuum. In the pure mirror-like spaciousness of reality, the five elementsⁱ of present awareness shine like a rainbow in the sky. In the next moment, emerging from within itself, as if looking back on its own image, the 'self', the subjective condition arises. In the next and last moment, projected images appear as separate objects in a field of appearances arising together with concepts that fix them as conditional. That condition is called the 'projected or objective field', and that is the 'objective condition'. Since these conditions – subjective and objective – combine as the effective conditions that provide delusion, their concomitance is called the 'cooperative condition'.

Thereafter, dualistic conceptual thought has veiled the shining of five-colored light, and by habituation with the five forms, which are like ice floats on a lake, or cream on yoghurt, Mount Meru, the four continents and the eight subcontinents appear. The potential or 'egg' of existence is derived from its distilled elixir while plants, trees, forests, herbs and flowers develop from moisture and heat.

Thus, it is in the intermediate kalpa, that the containing-world – the inanimate, seemingly material environment – is born from moisture and heat without the help of consciousness. On top of it all, resting upon a pure *udumbara*ⁱⁱ flower, an 'egg' is formed, from which stainless awareness is engendered miraculously, incorporating the five great elements. This is the receptacle of the impure egg of existence from which Man and Woman, characterized by aversion and desire respectively,¹⁷ are engendered. That is the physical receptacle.

Best Beloved, a further word of description: At first, above all, everything is all-inclusive envisionment, everything is emitted as light in an upper dimension, buddha and sentient beings in a lower

ⁱ The five great elements are to be understood as the five colored lights: see chapter 20.

ⁱⁱ *U d u m b a r a* - *ficus clomerata*, a fabulous blue 1000-petalled lotus flower appearing when a universal monarch or a buddha is born into the world, or once every yuga.

dimension. But in between the upper and the lower, creativity is expressed, and that intermediate period is characterized as 'the intermediate kalpa'.ⁱ Because it remains in its own space, it is said to be 'unshakeable'; believed to exist where it is nothing substantial, five-colored light is obscured but pure empty presence remains.

Described as Akshobhyavajra,ⁱⁱ it cannot evolve; in this sense, Akshobhyavajra is a cripple. In essence unimpeded clarity, but unable to shine, his identity as light is ambiguous. Elevated from the ground, yet he does not devolve into the duality of actual buddha and sentient being.

In this transitional phase, called 'adolescence', 'buds' or 'fresh shoots' germinate. In all the tantras and agamas that we have taught, wherever 'intermediate kalpa' occurs, it should be understood like this.

The sixteenth chapter of the great explanatory tantra Tiklay Kunsel, the reading of which alone is enough, teaches the cause and conditions of delusion and the formation of objective delusion with its physical base in the intermediate kalpa.

17. The Life Within

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: If the inanimate environment is as you say, what is the animate essence, comprising the six kinds of wandering mind?

The Teacher responded: Best Beloved, we shall explain it all, so absorb it without error! Just as a wind may arise in empty space, so intense mental energy is generated. Through the divine eye, the egg of all possible existence is perceived. Applying buddha mind, the egg is known as good and lovely. Through 'the touching of lips', desirous mind is generated. Pure presence accepts mental desire, and the germ of sentience matures into either male or female. Among the four modes of birth, this is egg-birth.

ⁱ It is evident here that 'kalpa' refers not so much to an extended period of linear time as to a dimension of the here-and-now, e.g. intermediate kalpa (*bar skal*).

ⁱⁱ Mikyo Dorje, Mi bskyod rdo rje.

From the five-colored light of the primal ground-*cum*-path, the five aggregates develop; with the five great elements as receptacles, body-mind aggregates, sense fields and sense faculties develop.¹ The male and female germs develop into Man and Woman, the first human beings. Thereafter humankind was womb-born. As the painful world gradually developed, coarse passions produced negative effects, finally engendering a living hell.

The seventeenth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the presence of the inner elixir.

18. Samsara in the Final Kalpa

Then Bhagawan spoke again: Vajradhara, listen! In all the tantras and agamas we have taught, the expression ‘the final kalpa’ implies the arising of sentient life endowed with the eight perceptual fields, and the movement of breath implies a thinking mind. The body-mind aggregates of sentient life include much diversity, which is why they are called ‘heaps’ (skandhas). ‘Sense fields’ (dhatus) are the fields of phenomenal reality. ‘Sense faculties’ (ayatanas) are so-called because they provide specific information. They are also called ‘powers’ (indriyas) because they radiate out of their respective ‘doorways’ and rule over their specific fields of appearance. ‘Form’ (rupa) consists of color and shape, which is the objective field of the eye. ‘Sound’ produces the objective field of the ear, ‘odor’ of the nose, ‘taste’ of the tongue, and ‘touch’ of the body.

Then the general explanation continues: ‘Feeling’ is a multiplicity of moods; ‘ideation’ is the apprehension of phenomenal objects; ‘karmic volition’ motivates the mind; ‘attention’ elevates the object of perception, affecting and demarcating it; and ‘consciousness’ cognizes it. The so-called ‘karmic volition’ differentiates all and everything and is driven by cause and effect.

Sentient beings born from heat and moisture develop suddenly. Those born miraculously are embodied fully developed. Those born from a

¹ These are body-mind aggregates (skandhas, *phung po*), sense fields (dhatus *kham*s), and sense faculties (ayatanas *skye mched*).

womb mature gradually. Those born from an egg transform and mature.

'Hell' is a time of anguished endurance; the hungry ghost suffers frustration; the animal world is a realm of darkness; human life is a swamp; the gods live a life of self-indulgent distraction: these births are all paths and processes because they are lived and traversed.

With a different perspective, samsara is an opportunity to transcend misery: in the hell realms misery is transcended with patience, in the realm of the hungry ghosts misery is transcended with intelligence, in the animal world misery is transcended with equanimity.

In the human realm people are full of desire, the realm of the demi-gods is full of strife, while the realm of the gods is joyful. Further, these ongoing situations are called 'realms' in the sense that they are environments in which life-forms abound.

Best Beloved, since all those realms are caused by afflictive emotion, we shall define those emotions and their categories here:

'Ignorance' is a failure to recognize the law of karmic causality and the reality of emptiness. 'Desire' is clinging attachment. 'Pride' is arrogance. 'Malice' is ill will. 'Hatred' is conflict. These are the six causes of the six realms.ⁱ The six essences and six fruitions evolve from them.

Master of the Secret! That is the experience of wandering beings of the six realmsⁱⁱ in the present. In all our tantras and agamas, understand their experience of the final kalpa according to this explanation.

*The eighteenth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the five elements in brief.*¹⁸

ⁱ Jealousy (*phrag dog*) is omitted in this list and malice (*khong khro*), or judgmental belief (*lta ba*), is added to the list of the five afflictive emotions.

ⁱⁱ The heavens, the titanic or demonic realm, the earth, the jungle of the animals, the desert of the hungry ghosts and the hell realms comprise the six realms.

19. The Five Great Elements

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: If that is the way samsara arises as ornament and display, please elucidate the nature of the five great elements that compose it.

The Teacher responded: We shall give you now the essence, semantic definition, types and metaphors of the word 'element'. Please remember them.

The essence of element is implied by its types: the elemental elixir consists of five distilled essences and five sediments. The essences, the 'five distilled essences' are nothing but the five aspects of present awareness. The 'five sediments' are earth, water, fire, air and space.¹⁹

The 'great elements' are described here semantically as the creativity of pure presence and its imagery as samsara and nirvana.

Understand the types of element in terms of the 'four alternatives',ⁱ two of distilled essence and two of sediment.

Best Beloved, apprehend this well! The distilled essences of the great elements are the five colors. Their sediments are earth, water, fire and air. The sediments of the distilled essences are flesh and bone. The distilled essences of the sediments are the five rainbow colors.

The similes: the great elements are 'like rays of sunlight', or 'like refracted rainbow light shining out of a crystal prism'.

The nineteenth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the five great elements in brief.

20. The Great Elements: Attributes

The Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! What are the attributes of the sediments? How are they derived from the five distilled essences? What are the characteristics of the distilled

ⁱ For the 'four alternatives' (*mu bzhi*) see chapter 94.

essences' elemental attributes? How do those distilled essences relate to the field of reality? When the sediments are released into their distilled essences, how are they released?

The Teacher responded: Please listen to me, Vajrapani. Earth is characterized by density; water by moisture; fire by temperature; air by lightness and movement; and space by extension,¹ and the great elements perform their separate functions accordingly.

The distilled essence of earth shines as white light that manifests as dense sedimental soil. Likewise, the distilled essences of the other four great elements shine as colored lights, manifesting as the other four sediments.

The distilled essences of the great elements are characterized in this way: firmness without solidity, cohesion without moisture, fluttering without movement, burning without heat, and radiance without extension.

In the distilled essences, the spaciousness of reality is one with dharmakaya. Therefore, for instance, the distilled essence of earth, inseparable from the nonduality of dharmakaya, has no solidity, and spaciousness is pure immaculate transparency, all and everything integrated within its scope.

Water reduced to cohesion without moisture is indivisible spacious reality and dharmakaya.

Immobility is totally unobstructed, and the energy that is the distilled essence of air stirring therein, arriving without departure through nondual spacious reality and dharmakaya, is the intrinsic radiance of all-inclusive present awareness.

Therein, through the absence of a dualistic concept projected as 'the other', the fire that burns without heat, clear in itself, without illuminating anything at all, is the radiance of all-embracing present awareness, radiance that does not penetrate space.

¹ Alternative translations of the attributes of the great elements are: earth – solidity; water – fluidity, liquidity; fire – heat, temperature; air – mobility; and space – accommodation.

When the sediments are released into their distilled essences, they dissolve into the real space of the five colors, which, in turn, dissolve into the essence of the fivefold radiance of awareness.

Signs of dissolution appear in that order.

The twentieth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the characteristics of the great elements and the manner of their emergence and dissolution.

21. The Three Kalpas

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! After the five great elements have evolved, and developing, persist, how then should we understand the meaning of 'kalpa'?

The Teacher spoke again: Listen, Vajrapani! Our elucidation treats the essence of 'kalpa' in three parts: ground, path and result. Originally, in the now, present awareness arises in the sensory domain. Then, at first, at the first juncture, phenomenal reality appearing as a unitary objective-*cum*-subjective manifestation (the ground) is interrupted. In the subsequent intermediate kalpa, due to subjective, conceptual constructs, present awareness sinks within appearances, and, fragmented, it devolves into an inanimate environment (the path). With an interruption of the 'inanimate environment', in its last phase, in the final kalpa, the apprehended objective world and the apprehending subject split apart, developing in separate ways, so that buddha and sentient beings, for example, are dualized (the result).

Thus, the reasoned semantic definition of 'kalpa' is provided by its division into three parts; a 'kalpa' is a field of appearances.

The twenty-first chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the three kalpas.

22. Trikaya: Dimensions of Form

This is the secret precept of the bright lamp shining in the vault of the sky, dissolving the darkness of night:

Ā PRAJÑA DHARMA RATNA KĀLA, OM JÑĀ KALA VAKANI
KULA KĀYA BHAÑCHA, HUM DHARMĀM PRASARA KĀRUJAH
DHATU A

Then the Bhagawan Mahavajradhara became absorbed in the sublime vision of trikaya, the wellspring of compassion.

The Master of the Secret implored him: Bhagawan Vajradhara! If your previous description shows how samsaric display arises in the three kalpas, how do the two dimensions of form manifest in the all-inclusive dharmakaya so that the display consists of what has been converted?ⁱ

The Teacher responded: The two form dimensions of gnostic compassion shine as crystal-like presence in sky-like reality, emanated like the sunshine-emitting sun, dissolving the darkness of stupidity, curing the diseases caused by the three poisons or the five poisonsⁱⁱ that infect the six families of wandering beingsⁱⁱⁱ travelling through samsara.

The Master of the Secret made this further request: Bhagawan Vajranatha Amitabha, how does sambhogakaya look in the spontaneous all-inclusive envisionment of dharmakaya?

The Teacher responded: The two dimensions that are gnostic compassion are simply the vision of what is converted with five representations of their own wisdom. No concrete attributes of 'bodies' or 'dimensions' exist. Rather, these attributes are to be seen as the vast universal envisionment of present awareness. Extrinsic appearance of attributes does not arise because conceptual thought is absent.

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Teacher, lord of compassion, please speak about those five sublime forms of wisdom.

ⁱ 'Conversion' is here applied not so much to a person or a mind as to a display of elemental light. Conversion occurs with spontaneous awareness of original purity and should perhaps be understood as synonymous with recognition.

ⁱⁱ The three are anger, desire and ignorance; the five are stupidity, desire, hatred, pride and jealousy.

ⁱⁱⁱ The six kinds of wandering mind belong to gods, titans, human beings, animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings.

The Teacher responded: All and everything arises and manifests in the singular essence of pure presence, so all and everything is called 'universal manifestation'.¹ Due to the boundless nonmanifesting potential of intrinsic presence, the one sole presence is also called 'the jewel source'. Endowed with gnostic compassion, it is 'boundless light'. Due to its unobstructed capacity for direct knowing, it is 'all-accomplishing'. Being immutable, it is also 'unshakeable'. Unobstructed by diminished presence, ever-present awareness, which is presence inseparably united with emptiness, is, above all, the essence of the five sublime forms of wisdom.

It is classified according to its qualities, the names of which indicate the way in which the wisdoms operate. 'Indeterminable', 'unimpeded', pure presence is the 'dimension' of wisdom, also called a 'wisdom body', because what is 'converted' appears in sublime form.

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Why cannot a sublime form or existential dimension appear unto itself?

The Bhagawan replied: Master of the Secret, listen well! Intrinsic presence is the unreified purity of the all-penetrating holistic light of the here-and-now.

To speak of it in more detail, although nothing is extrinsic to it, it is called our 'intrinsic nature'. Due to the nature of trikaya's three existential dimensions, being neither unified nor separated, pure presence is utterly intangible. Due to the empty purity of our two eyes, it is as if only the one eye of present awareness exists and since present awareness is utterly pure, it is transparent. Nothing superior to it can be.

The twenty-second chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the emergence of the two compassionate dimensions of form from dharmakaya, and the nonduality of dharmakaya and rupakaya due to the self-envisionment of pure presence within dharmakaya itself.

¹ 'Universal Manifestation or Effulgence' (*Kun shang chen po*), Vairochana, alternatively 'The Manifestion of Universal Multiplicity' (*Rnam par shang mdzad*).

23. Conversion

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! What is 'conversion'? How does it look? And how does it appear in sublime form?

The Teacher responded: Master of the Secret, know this!

In the immaculate Gandavyuha Pure-land,ⁱ
 In the matrix of indivisible dharmakaya reality,
 Five vasesⁱⁱ of awareness-essence,²⁰
 Vividly apparent yet of unreified quality,
 Five visible modes of empty reality,
 Blue, white, yellow, red and green, unmixed,
 Such is the radiance of perfect present awareness.

Within those five are the five sublime forms,ⁱⁱⁱ
 One in the center and one in each direction.
 'All-Manifesting Present Awareness' at the center
 Face to face with his four aspects:
 'Unshakeable', 'Great Jewel Source',
 'Boundless Light', 'Great All-Accomplisher'.
 Each with a symbol at his heart center,
 Each identified by his color,
 Creativity fully potentiated,^{iv}
 In the real space of the three thrones:^v
 The four families of buddha, all converted,
 Like images in a clear and empty mirror,
 By virtue²¹ of Vajradhara's perfected qualities,^{vi}
 In a vision of pure phenomenal reality,

ⁱ 'The immaculate densely-structured pure-land' (*rnam dag stug po bkod pa'i zhing*).

ⁱⁱ 'Five vases' (*bum pa lnga*) is a synonym of 'five hollows', 'five reservoirs', 'fivefold interior dimension'. For 'five vases' also see chapters 44, 54, 62, 91.

ⁱⁱⁱ 'Representations', 'buddha-bodies', 'buddha images', 'dimensions' (*sku lnga*): see 'five sublime forms' in GNT.

^{iv} Full awareness of body, speech and mind manifest.

^v The five aggregates and sense fields are the 'thrones' of the male and female rathagatas respectively; the sense-faculties are the thrones of male and female bodhisattvas respectively; and subsidiary thrones for the wrathful guardians: see 'three thrones' in GNT.

^{vi} Vajradhara is confounded here with Vairochana as principal of the mandala.

Unshakeable – Akshobhya,
 Jewel Source – Ratnasambhava,
 Boundless Light – Amitabha,
 And All-Accomplisher – Amoghasiddhi, shine forth.
 In the real space of the three thrones' spontaneity,
 Their various symbols hidden in their hearts,
 They show the vajra posture.
 Shining in the hollow of fivefold awareness,
 Each participating in his own reality,
 Each in his own hollow, the sublime forms shine forth,
 Each surrounded by four bodhisattvas.

Fivefold present awareness, complete and perfect,
 Inseparable from its field of appearances,
 Adverts to the potentiation of creative expression,
 Like a body inseparable from its shadow,
 Means and wisdom in nondual union.

Knowing Vairochana, we know sublime vision,
 Vairochana, self-envisionment without extrinsicality,
 Vairochana self-sprung, self-arising, self-envisioned,
 Intrinsic clarity, one-pointed, undivided.

The twenty-third chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel describes how raw sensory perception is naturally converted into its wisdom dimension in fivefold sublime symbolic form²² and how the sublime forms of what is converted are perfect and totally cognizant.

24. Location and Thrones

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Mahavajradhara!
 Please speak about location and throne.

The Teacher responded:

In immaculate spaciousness,
 An immanent location that is no location,
 A mandala of clear light that cannot be delineated –
 That is the supreme, all-inclusive, throne.

Our particular throne is either symbolic or existential and the first is explicated as fivefold.

The first, the symbol for trikaya that is neither union nor separation, is the lion throne with the three types of creativity fully potentiated.

The second, the symbol for trikaya existing within all experience of reality, is the immutable elephant throne, symbolizing indeterminacy lodged in the space of reality.

The third, the symbol for the twofold dimension of form moved by gnostic compassion, is the supreme horse throne, which represents dynamic movement. This is a 'representational' symbol.

The fourth, the symbol representing the imperceptible waves of grace moved by gnostic compassion and performing altruistic action in the light of that compassion, is the elegant peacock throne. That is also a 'representational' symbol, a metaphor that shows a concordant parallel meaning.

The fifth symbol, indicating the performance of unobstructed selfless action by means of magical power, is the throne of the unconstrained Garuda. The Garuda is not a representational symbol, but rather an instance of concordant expression, indicating manifest gnostic compassion endowed with magical power.

Present awareness, which is fluid, unimpeded skillful means and unchanging reality – the nonduality of sublime form and present awareness – is symbolized by the sun-and-moon throne.¹

These words are actual awareness of pure presence
 Arising from within, naked and untainted.
 They apply symbolic representation to indefinable truth.

The twenty-fourth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches about location and throne.

25. Throne: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please elucidate the essence, definition and illustrative metaphor of 'throne'.

¹ Iconographically they are represented as lunar and solar discs (*nyi zla ruam gnyis gdan*) that lie upon the lotus.

The Teacher replied: The essence of the throne is unchanging reality. All thrones have this same essence, yet categorization shows their character. These are the five thrones of the symbolic type and the throne of reality, which is inseparable from each of the five, and 'throne' according to its literal definition, 'a high place to sit'. Thus, these are the three types: symbolic, metaphysical and literal.

As for the simile, the thrones are 'like the thrones upon which kings are seated'.

The twenty-fifth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the meaning of 'throne'.

26. Mandala Circles: Principals and Retinues

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! With the principal of the mandala seated upon the throne of radiant presence, how is the retinue composed? Please describe to your followers the complex mandalas of principal and retinue.ⁱ

The Bhagawan replied: Vajrapani! Akshobhya ('Unshakeable Bhagawan') is flanked by Kshitigarbha ('Earth-Essence') on his right and Maitreya ('Loving Kindness') on his left, components of his compassionate means. His consort, Buddhalochana ('Clear-Eyed Buddha'), is flanked by Lasya ('Charm') and Pushpa ('Flower'). Thus each male buddha is accompanied by two male bodhisattvas representing his skillful means and the basis of skillful means, respectively, and the buddha-consort is accompanied by two female bodhisattvas representing wisdom and the basis of wisdom, respectively. This constitutes one mandala-circle.ⁱⁱ

Likewise, Ratnasambhava ('Jewel Source') is flanked by the shining figures of Samantabhadra ('All-Good') and Akashagarbha ('Space-Essence'), and his consort Mamaki by Mala ('Rosary/Garland') on the right and Dhupa ('Incense') on the left, constituting another large mandala-circle.

ⁱ The principal of the mandala, Vairochana, is described in chapter 23.

ⁱⁱ This describes a 'circle', 'group' or 'gathering' (*tshom bu*) as described in the third togal vision.

Bhagawan Amitabha ('Boundless Lightform') is flanked on the right by his two unimpeded bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara ('Tearful Gaze') on the right and Manjushri ('Tender Glory') on the left; while his consort Pandaravasini ('White Gown') is accompanied by Gita ('Song') on her right and Aloka ('Lamp') on her left, constituting another large mandala-circle.

The Bhagawan Amoghasiddhi ('All-Accomplisher') is flanked by the radiant figures of Vajrapani ('Vajra-in-Hand') and Sarvanivaranaviskambhin ('Cloud-Dissolver'), while his consort Samayatara ('Commitment Savioreess') is flanked by Nritya ('Dance') on her right and Gandha ('Taste') on her left, constituting another large mandala-circle.

All the male consorts (*yab*) are projections of Samantabhadra, and all the female consorts (*yum*) are projections of Samantabhadri. The sublime forms of the four male doorkeepers, representing transcendence of the bounds of the four misconceptions,ⁱ in union with the four female doorkeepers representing the four conceptual extremesⁱⁱ totally purified, are visible projections of Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri in union.ⁱⁱⁱ

These forty-two qualities of enlightenment,^{iv} unreified creativity, are replete with all the major signs and minor marks of sambhogakaya. Their compassionate activity is evinced as ornamentation and display. Conceptual thought is outshone by clear perception of all and everything. Embodied present awareness endowed with the all-seeing dharma-eye, the eye of reality, buddha super-sensory perception sees into all forms and modes, while the six seminal syllables^v that contain

ⁱ These are the assumptions that the delusive experiences of samsara are permanent, true, pleasant and concrete.

ⁱⁱ The four conceptual extremes are concepts of eternity (*rtag*), of nothingness (*chad*), of both eternity and nothingness and of neither eternity nor nothingness. Note that in chapter 30 the four boundless qualities of present awareness (i.e. loving kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity) are given as the existential basis of the four female doorkeepers.

ⁱⁱⁱ All forty-two sublime forms represent the totally pure nature of the color and immanent quality that labels them.

^{iv} These are the forty-two quiescent deities. See Appendix 1 and Introduction (p.34ff) for a full description.

^v The six Dzogchen seminal syllables (*yi ge drug*) are Á A HA SHA SA MA.

The six syllables are the seminal vibrations that manifest the purity of the

the essentialized variant vibrations of incessant self-sprung awareness, provide open ground with limitless potential for the magical nirmanakaya emanation of tulkus, all as gnostic compassion.

The twenty-sixth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the mandala circles of Principal and Retinue.

27. Sambhogakaya: Key Words

Then again the Teacher spoke: Now we shall give you a few phrases relating to sambhogakaya. Listen well!

In tantras, agamas and upadeshas, in the context of sambhogakaya, 'the existential dimension of enjoyment', the foregoing explanation applies, and therein it is described in such terms as 'mandala', 'principal and retinue', 'fivefold perfection', 'sugata', 'five buddha families', 'male and female bodhisattvas', 'self-envisioning clear light', and 'the stage of Vajradhara where all qualities are perfect'. This is a brief mention of a few such descriptions.

Since sublime form is fully adorned with all the signs and marks of perfection, this stage is called 'the stage of Vajradhara, all qualities perfected'. Such is sambhogakaya lightform arising in the overarching unity of the threefold underlying structure.²³

The twenty-seventh chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel summarizes the expressions that relate to sambhogakaya.

28. The Five Families

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Concerning the sublime form of present awareness of the now, the sovereign self-sprung buddha is endowed with fivefold sublime identity bearing the

six realms, similar to the function of OM MANI PEME HUNG HRI.
See also chapter 88.

thirty-two marks,ⁱ and the sovereign sublime sambhogakaya form of pure enjoyment endowed with forty-two marks. What are the common characteristics of each?

The Teacher replied: We shall speak of common characteristics of the fivefold present awareness that is created by no-one nor no-thing, self-sprung in sambhogakaya, the sambhogakaya dimension of the sublime lightform of present awareness which subsumes all goal-oriented accomplishment. All the characteristics of buddha, the fivefold sublime identity, are subsumed by the principal of the mandala. Vairochana and the other sublime forms of the five families, like images in a mirror, are lightform lacking intrinsic nature, and possessing the common thirty-two marks each sublime form is totally complete and perfect in itself.ⁱⁱ

Regarding sovereign sambhogakaya lightform, it outshines with its luster and splendor all seemingly concrete nirmanakaya characteristics and through its superiority it overwhelms nirmanakaya quality. The forty-two separate representations of clear light demonstrate the meaning of the sublime forms.

Vairochana is the inclusive image manifesting as five: Akshobhya is his immutability. As his nonspatial quality, Ratnasambhava is the wish-fulfilling gem. The lotus-body of Amitabha is the manifestation of untarnished compassionate creativity. Amoghasiddhi is the ultimate emanation of selfless action accomplishing without hindrance the good of self and others.

Due to its all-suffusing immanent quality and both the depth and breadth of its wisdom, the nature of buddha mind is symbolized by the buddha-family's eight-spoked wheel.

ⁱ The thirty-two physical features of sambhogakaya-dharmakaya buddha image may represent the thirty-two bodhisattvas of the retinue (see chapter 29 herein and Thrinley Norbu 1993 chapter 15).

ⁱⁱ The forty-two marks are here interpreted as the forty-two 'qualities' of Vairochana's mandala. Buddha images – sculpted, painted or otherwise represented – of the five sublime forms (*kaya*, *sku*), ornamented with the thirty-two or forty-two conventional marks and signs denominating dharmakaya or sambhogakaya respectively may be referred to as a 'visual metaphor'.

The five sublime forms representing five aspects of present awareness are unchanging and invincible and likewise the essence of buddha mind, which is represented by the vajra family's five-pronged vajra, is immutable and uncrystalizing.

Buddha mind as the source of all compassionate qualities is symbolized by the jewel family's wish-fulfilling gem.

Its essence immaculate and stainless, buddha mind is symbolized by the lotus family's eight-petalled lotus.

The vision of buddha mind transcending the four conceptual extremes, benefiting all wandering minds by the four selfless activities of boundless awareness,²⁴ is symbolized by the crossed-vajra family's vajra-cross.

A *yum*-consort is a lightform of present awareness. Her body-color and hand-gesture are compatible with her *yab*-partner. Representing the light of nondual awareness, the *yum* is an all-pervasive field of uncreated, natural light – such is the meaning of Samantabhadri, the principal *yum*.

The name 'Buddhalochana' (Clear-Eyed Buddha), consort of Akshobhya, refers to the unchanging nature and unimpeded essence of that field. The name 'Mamaki', consort of Ratnasambhava, refers to the natural sameness of all qualities in that field. The name 'Pandaravasini' (White Gown), consort of Amitabha, refers to the heat of brilliant light as the maturing immanent quality and as pure devotion. The name Samayatara (Commitment Savioress) refers to the release implicit in quiescence, remaining constantly in the same inalienable, unchanging space.

The twenty-eighth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the common attributes and the meanings of the five families' yab and yum consorts.

29. The Sambhogakaya Mandala Retinue

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please provide us with the constituents of the sambhogakaya mandala retinue.

The Teacher responded: Vajrapani! Though the retinue is numerous, all the *yab* males are projections of the *yab*-consort and all the *yum* females are projections of the *yum*-consort. In the existential matrix, the actuality of *yab* males and *yum* females is a singularity.

Then the Master of the Secret asked again: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please tell us the significance of the various components of the mandala retinue.

The Teacher responded: Vajradhara, listen to me! In the vision of Mahakshobhya, the bodhisattva Kshitigarbha signifies the pure presence of mirror-like awareness and Maitreya is the symbol of the unshakeable basis of clarity, while Lasyaⁱ (Charm) indicates an unimpeded, uncrystalizing, gaze, and Pushpa (Flower) signifies the simultaneity of *yab* and *yum*.

In the vision of Ratnasambhava, the bodhisattva Samantabhadra is pure presence of the awareness of sameness and the bodhisattva Akashagarbha is the symbol of the unborn basis of its clarity. Mala (Garland) and Dhupa (Incense) signify the clarification²⁵ of actual stains.

In the vision of Amitabha, the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara signifies pure presence of discriminating awareness and Manjushri is the symbol of the unborn basis of its clarity. Gita (Song) is the productive *yum*-consort, while her multifarious significations arising in present awareness shine as Aloka (Light).

In the vision of Mahamogasiddhi, the bodhisattva Vajrapani signifies the pure presence of all-accomplishing awareness, while the Sarvanivarana-viskambin (Cloud Dissolver) signifies the unborn clarity that is the basis of birth; Nritya (Dance) and Gandha (Taste) signify specific birth and time of birth.

This has been an abbreviation of an extensive topic.

Samantabhadra and consort in union signify the nonduality of present awareness and spaciousness, free of the four conceptual extremes, ever victorious over the four demon-tempters.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ All buddha names have been reverted to their conventional Sanskrit forms.

ⁱⁱ The four conceptual extremes are existence, nonexistence, both existence and nonexistence and neither existence nor nonexistence. The four

The four male doorkeepers stand for freedom from the four misconceptions, and the four female doorkeepers signify the four boundless qualities of present awareness.ⁱ

Taking the essence of five sublime forms as a sixth, six siddhamunis inhabit the six realms signifying unflagging purpose.

The twenty-ninth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the composition of the sambhogakaya retinue.

30. Tulku: Emanation

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! If that is how your lightform arises in sambhogakaya, how does the buddha-teacher come to this nirmanakaya pure-land dimension of magical emanation? How does nirmanakaya buddha-tulku arise?

The Teacher responded: Listen to me, Vajrapani! All tulku arises in the buddha speech of the forty-two enlightened qualities of sambhogakaya, as emanation of dharmakaya, appearing as nirmanakaya in accord with each of the six kinds of converted minds.

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: If that is the ground of the Teacher's advent, what is the womb of his birth? What produces his realized wisdom?

The Teacher replied: Listen to me, Vajrapani! Without any dependence upon parents, within an udumbara bloom we are born magically, emerging from awareness of pure presence like a honeybee relishing the pollen within a flower.

And again he replied: Vajrasattva, listen to me!

demons are 'the son of god' (divine pride), the demon of embodiment, the demon of afflictive emotion, and the lord of death.

ⁱ Note that the four boundless qualities (loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity) are attributes of present awareness (*ye shes tshad med bzhi*). But see chapter 26.

Relinquishing the body that we never possess,
We perceive the two fieldsⁱ that cannot be seen,
We learn the narrative that cannot be known,
We utter the word that cannot be spoken,
And our realized wisdom is born.

And again the Master of the Secret spoke: How is wisdom realized?

The Teacher replied:

Omniscient awarenessⁱⁱ is realized
In the immaculate purity of our dharmakaya;
Manifest knowledge is ever-present
In naturally perfected, unmoving, sambhogakaya;
And since we ourselves are nirmanakaya,
All experience is self-sprung reality.

The four empowermentsⁱⁱⁱ are replete
In the ground of our being,
Complete and perfect in four great streams;^{iv}
So even now empowerment is reflexively realized.
The five conduits of compassion^v are never stopped,
Conversion proceeding in compassion's pure ground;²⁶
In self-sprung mental consciousness,
The spring of knowledge never runs dry;
In vocal consciousness of nirmanakaya emanation,
Words always express their meanings.

The thirtieth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the emanation of the sublime tulku into this world.

ⁱ These are the 'internal' and 'external' fields of appearance (*yul gnyis*).

ⁱⁱ Omniscience (*thams cad mkhyen pa*) is twofold: knowledge of the ultimate nature of all things (through dharmakaya) and knowledge of the specifics of multiplicity (through sambhogakaya).

ⁱⁱⁱ This adverts to empowerment of body speech and mind and their unity.

^{iv} See 'four streams of empowerment' in GNT.

^v The five conduits, or doorways, of compassion are the eyes, ears, mouth, nose, and body.

31. Trikaya: Meaning

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Teacher, Vajradhara! Please let us know the meaning of the word ‘trikaya’ that you use repeatedly.

The Teacher responded: Listen to me, Vajrapani! The essence of dharmakaya is nondual, nonspatial, nontemporal wisdom.

Sambhogakaya is essentially the implicit, unthought radiance of the attributes of present awareness. The essence of nirmanakaya is uncrystalizing gnostic compassion.

As for the semantic definitions, dharmakaya is dharmakaya because it includes all and sustains all. Sambhogakaya is the dimension of enjoyment because it experiences enjoyment in the pure-land and in the maturation of the bodhisattva retinue. Nirmanakaya is the dimension of magical emanation, which is uncrystalizing buddha mind; it is nirmanakaya because it appears in multifarious forms; it is nirmanakaya because it is harmonious vision;²⁷ and nirmanakaya because it is evanescent and equivocal.

Regarding the classification of trikaya, firstly, dharmakaya has three dimensions: Changeless, unidentifiable pure presence is the dharmakaya dimension of dharmakaya. Uninterrupted intuition of pure presence as the five sublime forms is the sambhogakaya enjoyment dimension of dharmakaya. The five sublime forms emanating as what is converted is the magical nirmanakaya dimension of dharmakaya.

Best Beloved, the dharmakaya dimension is also called ‘the triad of essence, nature and compassion’, ‘fundamentally inherent trikaya’, ‘fruition present at the start’, ‘the completely inverted trikaya’, and also ‘fruition within fruition’.

Secondly, the all-inclusive dharmakaya dimension of sambhogakaya is Mahavairochana, Universal Manifestation, including the sambhogakaya enjoyment dimension of sambhogakaya composed of the symbols of the four families and the magical nirmanakaya dimension of sambhogakaya composed of the male and female bodhisattvas. Its different epithets are ‘the moment of clearly manifest fruition’, and ‘the structured trikaya’. Such are the three dimensions of sambhogakaya.

Thirdly, the three dimensions of nirmanakaya: The four families represent the dharmakaya dimension of nirmanakaya. Male and female bodhisattvas represent the sambhogakaya dimension of enjoyment. The spreading light of gnostic compassion is the dimension of magical nirmanakaya emanation.

Great Being! Trikaya is also called ‘source of gnostic compassion’, and ‘consummate trikaya’, and because trikaya exists in Vajrasattva’s gnostic compassion, which is naturally and universally beneficial, it is called ‘converter of wandering minds’.

Master of the Secret, take it as definitive! Vajrasattva is the dharmakaya dimension of the magical nirmanakaya emanation. Manjushri, Vimalagarbha and others issuing from the fontanel, from the spot between the eyebrows, on nose-emitted breath, and so on, constitute the sambhogakaya dimension of the magical nirmanakaya emanation. The six siddhamunis, Garab Dorje and the others, constitute the magical nirmanakaya dimension of nirmanakaya.

The thirty-first chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel classifies trikaya.

32. Trikaya: Key Terms

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please give us the keywords of trikaya.

The Teacher responded: Master of the Secret! In all the tantras and agamas that we have taught, wherever we use the word trikaya, its essence, semantic definition, categories and synonyms should be understood as revealed in the previous chapter.

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Please explain trikaya in terms of the triad of essence, nature and compassion.

The Teacher replied: The *essence* of trikaya is uncreate, uncontrived, unstructured and unchangeable. It is intrinsically immaculate, unconditioned, all-inclusive present awareness; indestructible, pure and empty reality like sky; and, transparent, unreified presence pure in the now.

The *nature* of trikaya is the unremitting radiance of the five-colored light of present awareness within the essential, real space, each color containing a basic attribute of the all-inclusive fundamentally inherent awareness.

Trikaya's *compassion* is in its essence the unreified mudra that is the fivefold sublime form.²⁸

Best Beloved, the essence is dharmakaya, the nature is sambhogakaya and gnostic compassion is nirmanakaya, and trikaya shines incessantly as the creative base of all emanation. The three existential dimensions of trikaya are fundamentally inherent. The two form dimensions, which are pure and empty results of a pure and empty cause, are present as immanent qualities in the intrinsic clarity of dharmakaya. This is called 'the three existential dimensions present in the ground'.

As for the term 'inverted trikaya,' it refers to the inversion of the three existential dimensions.¹ Because all conditioned experience is pure from the beginning, it is spontaneous self-sprung awareness. With the inversion of outer and inner continuity (tantra), what are recognized as converted into nirmanakaya embodiment are the five families: nirmanakaya is the inverted sambhogakaya. Dzogchen, The Great Perfection, and so on, inverted, the common people are nirmanakaya emanation. Through inversion, it may be said, 'We may never familiarize ourselves with nonmeditation, but our essential identity is nevertheless inalienable from sublime vision': that is constitutional inversion. Our ordinary body of two dimensions is made by dharmakaya and is, in actuality, immeasurable, inconceivable sublime form: thus dharmakaya inversion.

Sambhogakaya inverting nirmanakaya, nirmanakaya inverting sambhogakaya – that is inversion.

Best Beloved, that is an explication of the dimension of dharmakaya from a superior perspective. It is 'great'² to the extent that it occurs by itself, without any cause. Since the two dimensions of form exist intrinsically within the primal ground, it is fruition existing within fruition; that is why it can be said to exist without change.

¹ 'Inversion' may be termed 'hippy dharma', 'buddha turned inside out,' (*skun gsun ja log pa*).

² 'Great' (*chen po* -maha) here implies 'all-inclusive', 'self-sprung', 'spontaneous'.

Master of the Secret! Vairochana is conceived as the dharmakaya dimension of sambhogakaya because the four families are derived from him and remain immanent, suffused by his buddha-qualities. He is the ground of the four families and the ground of all knowledge. In turn, the four families enjoy the immaculate buddha mind of Vairochana, acting out gnostic compassion as their respective retinues of cognate male and female bodhisattvas. That is the four families' pure enjoyment dimension of sambhogakaya. Wise in the different and multifarious types of compassion, male and female bodhisattvas are nirmanakaya emanations. We should also understand the disposition of the three existential dimensions of dharmakaya and nirmanakaya accordingly.

When exalted sublime form, perfect and complete, appears manifestly as the mature converted retinue,¹ that is called 'the time of clear manifestation of fruition'.

The omniscient buddha mind illuminates dharmakaya above; the eye of omniscience illuminates the magical nirmanakaya emanation below, and the supreme sublime form of clear light shines in between. Such is the disposition.

Looking with the unthought dharma-eye, the lights of the seminal syllables issuing from his mouth, a Vajrasattva appears in each of a million worlds like ours, and the six siddhamunis manifest one in each of the six realms of wandering beings. Vajrasattva is thus trikaya as the source of compassion, gnostic compassion springing from within his sublime form.

Manifestly acting for the benefit of wandering beings, nirmanakaya comprises the three existential dimensions that convert them. The dimension of magical nirmanakaya emanation is uncrystalizing, because the unremitting process of compassionate creative expression never concretizes.

In short, the key words are 'dharmakaya', 'sambhogakaya', 'nirmanakaya', 'buddha mind', 'lord', 'glory', 'refuge', 'buddha-teacher' and 'lamp of the world'.

¹ The retinue is nirmanakaya of dharmakaya in constant instantaneous conversion of samsara and nirvana to present awareness, the recognition of the pure nature of the five great elements, and so on. Conversion implies recognition; awareness implies conversion.

The thirty-second chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel elucidates trikaya and summarizes its modes.

33. Buddha: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Trikaya's three dimensions in the now are buddha. Please tell us the essence, semantic explanation, categories and aspects of 'buddha'.

The Teacher replied: Vajrapani! The essence of buddha is stainless present awareness. The literal definition is 'purity-expansion'ⁱ because the purity of all stains of passion is optimized and omniscient awareness is fully expanded. It has two types: buddha that is spontaneity in the primal ground, and buddha that is manifest realization. Buddha is called 'buddha' by virtue of one of those endowments.

Buddha is Teacher, because dharmakaya informs sambhogakaya, which in turn informs nirmanakaya, and nirmanakaya then instructs wandering minds. Conquering the demon of perversion through realized wisdom possessing the powers of omniscience, and overcoming the absurdities of dualistic perception, buddha is called 'Bhagawan'.ⁱⁱ The realization attained by such omniscience is 'glory',ⁱⁱⁱ while showing that reality to all is the 'glory' of others.

Dispelling the gloom of wandering minds' diminished presence, buddha is like a lamp.

The thirty-third chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the essence, semantic definition, types and metaphors of buddha in summary.

ⁱ The components of the Tibetan word for 'buddha' are *sangs* (pure) and *rgyas* (expanded).

ⁱⁱ Super-Conqueror, 'Beyond Conquest' (*bcom ldan 'das*).

ⁱⁱⁱ Shri (*dpal*).

34. Trikaya: Qualities

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! How does dharmakaya overcome demons? How does sambhogakaya overcome demons? How does nirmanakaya overcome demons?

The Teacher responded: Best Beloved, listen carefully! Dharmakaya overcomes the lord of death because of the absence of origination and cessation in dharmakaya. It overcomes the demon of embodiment because of the absence of concrete body-mind aggregates in dharmakaya. Through the nonduality of dharmakaya, the demon of passion (afflictive emotion) and the demon of divine pride are overcome, vanquished in real space.

Sambhogakaya overcomes the lord of death because the five sublime forms are inanimate. The enchanting illusion of present awareness conquers the demon of embodiment. A thoughtless mind overcomes the demon of afflictive emotion and the demon of divine pride.

Vajrasattva as nirmanakaya conquers the lord of death demon through his realization of dharmakaya, and by the same token, he overcomes the demon of afflictive emotion and the divine pride demon. Through realization of the actuality of sambhogakaya, he conquers the demon of embodiment.

The Master of the Secret then asked: What are the attributes of trikaya's three existential dimensions?

Listen, Vajrapani! Dharmakaya, in its vast immanent potential, retains fivefold present awareness and the two dimensions of form. In sambhogakaya, all qualities are perfected, which is indicated by the signs and marks. Sublime vision possesses fivefold present awareness and the six super-sensory perceptions. Nirmanakaya is endowed with the powers of transformation and magical emanation.¹ That is a very brief synopsis.

The Master of the Secret then asked: What do trikaya's three existential dimensions spontaneously resolve?

¹ Siddhi and riddhi (rdzu 'phrul dang cho 'phrul).

Listen, Best Beloved! Dharmakaya resolves all dualistic extremes. Sambhogakaya resolves all dualistically perceived samsaric experience. Through the mastery of the skillful means of transcendent wisdom, nirmanakaya resolves the absurdity of living in neither samsara nor nirvana. This epitomizes the many ways in which trikaya is transcendent.

The Master of the Secret asked: How are the three existential dimensions 'pure and expanded'?

Listen, Best Beloved! Dharmakaya buddha purifies all dualistically perceived concrete experience and expands naturally detached, nonfixated, present awareness. Sambhogakaya purifies samsaric experience and expands percipience and the great qualities of sublime form. Nirmanakaya purifies ignorance and misunderstanding and purifies samsara as an autonomous continuity, and expands wisdom, skillful means and compassion.

The Master of the Secret asked: How are trikaya's existential dimensions pure and empty of all stains?

Dharmakaya is empty of the stain of essential substantiality; sambhogakaya is empty of the stain of tangibility; and nirmanakaya is empty of the stains of passion.ⁱ

The thirty-fourth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the stainless nature of trikaya, bhagawan and buddha.

35. Tulku: Altruistic Action

Then the Master of the Secret asked: How does the trikaya's never crystalizing gnostic compassion benefit wandering minds?

The Teacher responded: Best Beloved! First, we were born as an eight-year-old boy. Then, for the next eight years on the axis of wisdom we turned the wheel of fivefold present awareness,ⁱⁱ and through that realization, we were delivered; and by the sublime vision

ⁱ Note the *gyan stong* phraseology: 'reality is empty of all phenomena'.

ⁱⁱ All distinction between 'wisdom' (*shes rab*) and 'present awareness' (*ye shes*) has been lost in this formulation.

itself, we were released from that vision. For the next eight years, manifesting many and various emanations, we worked for the sake of all sentient beings.ⁱ

Initially, we taught the divine law to humankind. Then to alleviate the longing of our disciples, threading pearls onto a precious silken cord, we turned the exoteric wheel and through compassion, in order to release others, provisionally, but with hidden intent, we taught the lower approaches. Then, on the summit of Blazing Fire Mountain,²⁹ we taught the dharmas that directly and fully show buddha-truth. Later, on Vulture Peak,ⁱⁱ from our heart we taught the great tantras, secret and so marvelous, churning them in the vase of our throat, and from the lotus-tongue spreading them over the consciousnesses of the five senses. Here we chanted *The Cuckoo's Song of Pure Presence*ⁱⁱⁱ in a voice endowed with the sixty qualities of melodious speech,^{iv} eliminating all doubt and complication from the minds of those who heard it.

Thus at the age of twenty-four, when we passed into nirvana, we left behind three different testaments.^v

For the sake of those who would come after us, we also revealed *The Circle of Total Illumination* and the *Compendium*.^{vi} We left them for the sake of those who would have the good fortune to follow us and meet us. Thus leaving behind us a reliquary receptacle, our trikaya, we passed into parinirvana. Please relate this story in the future.

The thirty-fifth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches how the tulku performs altruistic activity.

ⁱ The three eightfold cycles relate to the threefold turning of the wheel of dharma in the eight fields of consciousness by Vajradhara/Sakyamuni/Garab Dorje.

ⁱⁱ Gridakuta is located in contemporary Rajgir, Bihar, India.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Rig pa khu phyug*: see chapter 79 and Appendix 3.

^{iv} See GNT.

^v These testaments formed the basis of the Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana approaches.

^{vi} *Kun 'dus*: see Appendix 3.

36. Eight Approaches: The View

Then the Teacher became absorbed in the samadhi of inconceivable revelation.

At that time the Master of the Secret said to him: Bhagawan, Master of Skillful Means! Through your vision, please elucidate the eight approaches of perverse teaching, which, however, contain a hidden agenda.ⁱ

Then this secret precept resounded thrice on the voice of the turquoise cuckoo,ⁱⁱ the Teacher, from the top of a nine-storied jewel stupa:

SVABHA YANA PRASĀRĀ DUPAYA

The Teacher responded: Master of the Secret, listen carefully! To the two levels of converted retinue, the common and the extraordinary, we shall describe the views of the eight gradual approaches with a critical overview, which reveals the distinction between provisional and definitive views.

The views of the auditors (shravakas), the hermits (pratyekabuddhas), the bodhisattvas, adepts of the three lower tantras and adepts of the creative and fulfillment phases,ⁱⁱⁱ all retain concrete reference points due to biased interpretation of the two truths. Since those views indicate minds still caught in a dualistic trap,³⁰ their views do not facilitate recognition of self-sprung awareness and, therefore, are mistaken, perverse views. Corrupting³¹ and deviating from reality, those views are the wishful thinking of desirous minds.

Master of the Secret! These are the eight views^{iv} impaired by attachment:

ⁱ The hidden agenda is the recognition of the nature of mind in an unthought timeless moment.

ⁱⁱ The cuckoo, harbinger of spring, is the symbolic buddha-teacher and source of the tantras.

ⁱⁱⁱ The creative phase relates to mahayoga, and fulfillment phase to anuyoga.

^{iv} The upa-tantra and yoga-tantra views are confounded in this, and together with the following three chapters a total of seven, not eight, gradual approaches are counted.

The auditors (shravakas) understand the absence of personal identity, but since they cannot undermine the notion of objects as concrete entities, they still consider the subjective and objective aspects of experience to be separate entities. They can stop the constant flow of grasping at seemingly concrete experience for a moment, as if resolving the duality of eternity and nihilistic nothingness, but the flow of attachment is like the current of the great river Ganga.

Identifying the vivid manifestation of external objects as conventional, relative reality, they believe atoms to be absolutely real, which is like believing that a single hair of a yaktail is real while the entire tail is unreal, or believing that a blade of grass in an alpine meadow is real while the meadow is unreal. The views of both schools of auditors, Sautrantikas and Vaibhashikas, are laced with wishful thinking based in desire, which is antipathetic to blissful nonduality.

Similarly, hermits (pratyekabuddhas) comprehend the absence of a substantial personal identity, but then they are biased towards reality as emptiness. By their very bias towards the absence of identity, they attach themselves to the notion of substantiality. The faint but distinct yearning mentality of these 'self-styled buddhas' corrupts the pure pleasure of detachment.

Bodhisattvas realize the absence of both identities – subjective and objective – and assert the two truths. They see absolute reality as mind or as something beyond it. They do not disdain conventional appearances, but see relativity as dream and illusion. The bodhisattvas' view, however, differentiating the relative from the absolute is a deviation from the nondual pleasure that is present awareness.

Though unstirring from implicit, unthought, real space, free from birth and cessation, kriya-tantra adepts view the two sattvas¹ as lords to serve. Their view, laden with craven attachment, is antipathetic to the actual pure pleasure of Samantabhadra.

Unmoving in unthought spaciousness, free of birth and death, upayoga adepts view the two sattvas as brothers or friends, but their

¹ In mahayoga meditation, samaya-sattva (*dam tshig sems dpa*) is visualized and the jnana-sattva (*ye shes sems dpa*) is the resultant, actual presence of a buddha-deity.

wishful thinking is antipathetic to inseparable present awareness and pure pleasure.

Visualizing the sense fields and sense faculties, which are unborn and uncrystalizing, unthought and unmoving, as gods and goddesses (buddha-deities), mahayoga adepts' aspiration is fixed upon sublime form with divine attributes, a manner quite antipathetic to the pure pleasure of simplicity.

Unstirring, unthought, without birth or cessation, identifying the envisionment of spaciousness and present awareness as gods and goddesses, the wishful thinking of the anuyoga view runs against the pure pleasure of insubstantial, transparent self-envisionment.

The thirty-sixth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the holistic vision of the eight approaches.

37. Eight Approaches: Meditation

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Teacher, Vajradhara! Regarding the views of the eight approaches that you have just elucidated, how are they experienced?

The Teacher responded: Vajrapani, listen carefully! The eight methods of meditation entail focus upon seemingly concrete objects, fixed reference points, to which mental effort is directed. Due to a failure to understand that freedom from striving – effortlessness – is release from the grasping intellect, these gradualistic meditations perpetuate habits of ignorance.

What are the methods of the meditations of the eight approaches?

The auditors (shravakas) meditate according to the following scheme: They come to think of their material bodies as filthy containers, and meditating upon them as putrid and rotten, decaying and decomposed, they overcome attachment to their bodies. Through the twelve factors of calm-abiding meditation,ⁱ they rid themselves of the

ⁱ These twelve factors may be degrees of the four stages of meditative absorption (see GNT) in shamatha meditation.

idea of the contents of the six fields of consciousness as fixed objects of perception.

Hermits (pratyekabuddhas) meditate on the twelve links of interdependent origination,ⁱ beginning with ignorance and continuing to old age and death. With the mind directed to the forehead, they focus on a white skeleton the size of a thumb, which is gradually enlarged. Eventually they attain skeleton-vision. Then they meditate until their attention ceases.

Bodhisattvas, obsessed with their wishful thinking, meditate upon 'the intrinsic clarity of mind-only' as the nature of mind, familiarizing themselves with the indivisible truth of the middle way, which is like the center of the sky.

Kriya-tantra adepts having purified the 'hosts of empty deities',ⁱⁱ then meditate on the sublime forms of the three families, each of which holds a symbolic mudra.ⁱⁱⁱ

Yoga-tantra adepts first traverse the five paths to enlightenment,^{iv} and then meditate on the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment^v and the four mudras.^{vi}

Mahayoga adepts first practice the three samadhis^{vii} and then meditate on the ubiquitous peaceful and wrathful deities,^{viii} with the four mudras as the highest objects of meditation.

ⁱ The twelve links are ignorance, volition, consciousness, name and form, six sense faculties, contact, sensation, craving, grasping, becoming, birth, old age and death.

ⁱⁱ The six 'empty' kriya deities (*kriya lha drug*).

ⁱⁱⁱ Vajra, sugata and padma represent the families of Akshobya, Vairochana and Amitabha whose hand-token mudras are vajra, wheel and lotus.

^{iv} The five paths are the paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing, purification and release.

^v For the 'thirty-seven factors of enlightenment' see GNT.

^{vi} The four mudras are mahamudra, samaya-mudra, dharma-mudra and karma-mudra: see chapter 69.

^{vii} The three samadhis are, 'just as it is' samadhi, goal-oriented samadhi and all-illuminating samadhi.

^{viii} These are the forty-two quiescent (peaceful) deities and fifty-eight dynamic (wrathful) deities (*zhi 'ebro rab 'byams*).

Anuyoga adepts prepare by uttering only seed-syllables, and then immediately they clearly visualize the four mudra-consorts of the five body-mind aggregates,ⁱ which are like bubbles in water or like clay *tsatsa* being extracted from their shaping mold. By first practicing the stages of meditative absorption,ⁱⁱ they manage to prepare themselves for the main practices, and then reach their purpose of ultimate fruition.

The thirty-seventh chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the diverse meditations of the eight approaches.

38. Eight Approaches: Conduct

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: When the adepts of the eight approaches are meditating according to their respective instruction, please relate the differences in their conduct?

The Teacher responded: Listen carefully, Master of the Secret! Adepts of all the eight approaches practice the eight styles of conduct with painful striving for attainment. Commoners embrace conventional attitudes and courses of action and reject others, while Tantric adepts, to the contrary, act without discrimination.

As to the specific features of the auditors' (shravakas') conduct: They observe physical purity by never taking what is not given, by abandoning sexual misconduct and renouncing killing; they observe verbal purity by avoiding lying, idle talk, slander and cursing; they observe mental purity by discarding covetousness, ill-will and perverse views. They perform these ten virtues for their personal benefit.

In the hermits' (pratyekabuddhas) conduct, through absurd, or incongruous, magical emanations,ⁱⁱⁱ they do a little bit to help people.

ⁱ The consorts of the aggregates (pancha-skandha) represent the four great elements (*phung po lnga yi phiyag rgya bzhi*) plus their ground.

ⁱⁱ The four stages of meditative absorption are conceptual thought, attentive examination, joy and intensive (one-pointed) soft-focus.

ⁱⁱⁱ Simultaneous emanation of fire and water (*rdzu 'phrul ya ma zung dag*) is an example.

The conduct of bodhisattvas is imbued with the four boundless qualities of present awareness and the four socially magnetizing activities,ⁱ performed mainly for the benefit of others.

Kriya-tantra adepts practice ritual bathing, chastity, mantra and ritual hand-mudras, while employing the three symbolic ritual substances.ⁱⁱ

Yoga-tantra adepts practice the four selfless activitiesⁱⁱⁱ and existential and ecological harmony.

Mahayoga adepts endeavor to attain the perfect good of all wandering minds by means of both skillful means and wisdom.

As for the conduct of anuyoga adepts, through the skillful means of absenting dualistic appearances, with spaciousness and present awareness as a mutually dependent pair, they enjoy each other.

The thirty-eighth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the manner of conduct of the eight approaches.

39. Eight Approaches: Fruition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Teacher, Master of Compassionate Means! What are the starting point, commitment and holistic vision of each of the eight approaches and how is fruition attained in each?

The Teacher spoke: An initiate acts according to the particular perspective of his chosen path immediately that path is entered upon, so conduct defines the manner of action at the starting point. Commitment is adduced from the view, and thus is included in the view. The various meditation practices are supreme accomplishment,

ⁱ The four socially magnetizing activities are offering gifts, uttering pleasing speech, providing appropriate teaching, and practicing consistency of word and deed.

ⁱⁱ The three symbolic substances are ashes, blood and semen (*phyi nang rdzas gsum*).

ⁱⁱⁱ Formally, this involves ritual performance of pacification, enrichment, control, and destruction.

and the fruition of each approach is to be found as such. The product of each approach is the result of the view that precedes and identifies the specific meditation.

Thus the auditors' (shravakas') fruition, view, meditation and action perfected define the final maturation of the four pairs of noble beings.ⁱ

The hermits' (pratyekabuddhas) view, meditation and action completely fulfilled, fruition consists of the two visionary aspects indicated by the parrot and the rhinoceros.ⁱⁱ

The bodhisattvas actualize their view, meditation and action by realizing successively the purity of the ten bodhisattva stagesⁱⁱⁱ of attainment of Universal Light.

Kriya-tantra adepts, with their fruition completed, in their view and meditation attaining the trikaya of the three families, they know the state of Vajradhara.

Yoga-tantra adepts, through the blessing of their view, meditation and action, complete the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment and attain the nature of trikaya.

Mahayoga adepts, actualizing view, meditation and action, fully manifest mahamudra,^{iv} and realize the eleventh stage, Universal Light.

Adepts of anuyoga, their view, meditation and action as sublime vision, bearing the name Vajrasattva, surpass the great stage of complete perfection, and remain on the stage of the Desireless Lotus Eye.

The thirty-ninth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the fruition of the various approaches and how entry, commitment and practice are included in their respective view, meditation and conduct.

ⁱ The 'noble beings' of hinayana tradition are 'stream-winner', 'once-returner', 'never-returner' and 'enemy-destroyer (arhat)'.

ⁱⁱ The chattering parrot is flamboyantly colored, and the rhino is thick skinned and immovable.

ⁱⁱⁱ See GNT.

^{iv} Here 'mahamudra', the 'great seal', 'symbol' or 'gesture', is identified with clarity: but see chapter 69.

40. The Great Perfection: View

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! If such were the view, meditation, conduct and ultimate fruition of the eight lower provisional approaches, what then is the ultimate, definitive view?

The Teacher responded: Now we reveal the view that is no view, the view of atiyoga, the view that is free of all points of reference. Unreified, transparent present awareness, the view is the spontaneity of awareness that is intrinsic to pure presence. Nothing is extrinsic to it; it includes everything.

Whatever appears in any specific instant of that intrinsic awareness of presence is the radiance of all-inclusive present awareness, which is Bhagawan Vajradhara as the now. That is why all-inclusive envisionment is perfect buddha; to the extent that buddha has no intrinsic existence, it is devoid of dualistic perception; and awareness of presence consists of its own radiance.

The pure nature of the four great elements, which is the fifth element, pervades the now as spacious reality. In the spaciousness of that reality arises the sun 'awareness of presence', shining everywhere without spatial or temporal distinction or bias.

Whatever flickering of thought occurs in the ocean of self-sprung awareness, when neither repressed nor cultivated it is a golden fish swimming in the Manasarovar Lake.³²

What is intrinsically nonexistent, what never crystalizes, can never be observed or discovered. In neither inside nor outside, nor in the inner of the outer, can any subtle object of realization be discovered.³³

Even though outer and inner – the environment and the beings that inhabit it – are visible as distinct entities to innocent eyes, in the transparent unreified view of intrinsic presence, they are absolutely immaculate in the now.

Samantabhadra's face gazes into all ten directions simultaneously; everything swirls together in the blissful matrix of his consort's bhaga.ⁱ

ⁱ Yumtso (*Yum mtsho*), the consort-lake of Mt Kailash.

Moreover, in the sole holistic seed of light containing the entirety of the three worldsⁱⁱ in real space,³⁴ in the sublime vision of self-sprung awareness of presence, in the absence of buddha, sentient beings do not even nominally exist, and in the absence of sentient beings, neither sensory fields nor great elements exist.

Our own mindstream, immaculate as a crystal statue, is the stainless transparent dharmakaya. Although earth, water, fire and air manifesting in space seem substantial to an unrealized mind, all appearances, lacking intrinsic existence, are in reality the radiance of present awareness in the now. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the sky, not in it exactly nor out of it, not separate from it but on the contrary shining within it, the radiance of present awareness in the now – self-arising, self-manifesting, self-radiant – shines in the real space of the field of reality (dharmadhātu), inseparable from dharmakaya.

Seemingly distinct from the sky in which it shines, yet that radiance is uncrystalizing and unimpeded.³⁵ In its clarity, it is nonconceptual present awareness of the now, which is dharmakaya. In radiance self-envisioned, both elixir and its container, it is buddha, while selfless karma and gnostic compassion on the periphery are empty and pure.ⁱⁱⁱ

‘Graduated spiritual stages’ and ‘degrees of release’ are abhorred^{iv} by the supreme luminous mind; reality is unapproachable on a graduated path of linear progression. If we try to approach it, present awareness fades into the distance.

Through nonaccumulation, in the now, the dual provision of virtue and present awareness is complete. Through nonpurification, in the now, the dual obscuration of afflictive emotion and intellect is pure and empty.³⁶

ⁱ The ‘bhaga’ (*gnas grang ba*) is the universal vagina.

ⁱⁱ The three worlds are the worlds of desire (kamadhatu), form (rupadhatu); and formlessness (arupadhatu). Also the sky, the earth and the subterranean worlds.

ⁱⁱⁱ In Longchenpa’s recension (see Appendix 2) it is clear that the envisionment (as container) and elixir (the contained) are inseparable as sambhogakaya, while gnostic compassion and karmic activity are nirmanakaya emanation.

^{iv} Such ‘abhorrence’ (*sel ba*) implies immediate elimination, which is dissolution into its nondual essence.

In the unborn, unthought mandala of light, in the now, meditation upon a deity in his divine mansion is superfluous. We may meditate on the body of the Great Heruka with his mandala of wrathful attributes while reciting the mantras of his buddha body, speech and mind continuously, like a river's flow, but thereby we maintain a separation, turning our back upon the awareness of presence in the now.

Complete in the now, present awareness is not to be sought after and re-accomplished. It cannot be deliberately pursued or progressively meditated upon.

Consider a butter-lamp: just as its essence is its light, so radiance is awareness of presence. Past, present and future buddha has the one taste of nonduality, like water poured into water.

The fortieth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the flawless view of the Great Perfection.

41. Nonmeditation and Meditation

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Teacher, Vajradhara!
To meditate or not to meditate – please tell us what we should do.

To which the Teacher responded: Apprehend this well, Vajrapani!

The nondual pure pleasure that we show,
Transcends both meditation and nonmeditation;
Intrinsic presence realized by the faculty of wisdom,
Blissful nonduality is neither unitary nor separate.

Without deliberate effort, leaving things as they are,
So that they never stir from their own real space,
The flow, like the River Ganga, is uninterrupted.

That is taught for the brightest among you.³⁷
For those of lesser acumen,
Meditation is taught as nonmeditation.
Those in whom the creativity of wisdom has not potentiated³⁸

¹ This includes those without the ability to see through their own miasma.

Believe that buddha is impossible without meditation.

Master of the Secret, listen to me! Like a lotus that grows undefiled in a swamp, intrinsic presence, although present in both outer and inner delusion, is never touched by that delusion. Presence remains utterly untainted in the now – that is enlightened buddha.

Best Beloved! Dharmakaya, as the pure ground of all and everything, ornamented as pure manifestation by the two dimensions of form, comprises ultimate trikaya, which is neither unitary nor separate. Trikaya is the intrinsic clarity within present awareness of the now, like a butter-lamp inside a vase.

Best Beloved, the ephemeral outer environment, the aggregate of form,ⁱ the mandala of the immeasurable mansion wherein the nature of wandering minds is recognized, that is the radiance of the unreifiable trikaya.

The divine palace of present awareness, which is the clear light of pure pleasure with the four sublime forms, each with inherent buddha body, speech and mind, that is the immaculate internal mandala that never crystalizes.

Since the compassionate expression of that mandala, like the mandala of the five herukas,ⁱⁱ is unimpeded, incessant and non-crystalizing, it is a self-sprung mandala of compassion.

Those three mandalas, outer, inner and secret,ⁱⁱⁱ describe undeluded buddha.

Best Beloved, the experience of pure potential is revealed in undeluded buddha, disclosed in the mirror of buddha mind. Just as our physically conditioned body is reflected in a material mirror, so unconditioned awareness, always shining, never crystalizing, shines in the mirror-like awareness of the primal ground.

That indeterminable ground, the source of all things, is not made by a creator's hand; on the contrary it is a self-arising mind-mirror of a

ⁱ The aggregate of form (rupa-skandha, *gzugs kyi phung po*) is the visible aspect of the name and form (nama-rupa) aggregate.

ⁱⁱ The five herukas are the buddha, vajra, ratna, padma, and karma herukas.

ⁱⁱⁱ See 'three mandalas' in GNT.

five-storied crystal stupa, self-sprung from the mind-matrix of Amitabha, Boundless Lightform.ⁱ Expressed as a symbol, the conditioned physical casket cannot hold unconditioned awareness; the latter can only appear as it really is in the mirror of mind. *The Great Tika of Secret Precept on the Ground of Delusion* establishes that conclusively.

Since it is self-sprung spontaneous awareness, it can never be experienced in terms of past, present or future. That immutable view entails ‘the great leap-over’ⁱⁱ established in *The Tika of the Ineffable Zing of Reality as the Birth of Present Awareness Through the Reversal of Delusion*.

The nail of unchangeable reality is planted through evidential signs, as implied in *The Great Tika of Instruction* and grounded in *The Tika of the Ineffable Zing of the Reality of Essential All-inclusive Identity*.ⁱⁱⁱ If we realize such unchangeable reality, we do not need to meditate, and since its vast potential of immanent quality is intrinsic nature, neither union with it nor separation from it is possible.

Neither the object of meditation nor the meditator can be conceived as substance or attribute; whatever appears³⁹ is utterly ungraspable, like the fluttering wings of a bee.

Ordinary individuals are not released until they realize that the ultimate nature of phenomena – reality itself – is inconceivable. If their vision-realization of that is distractible, it is at fault, whereas undistractible realization of it is evidence of fulfillment of the secret precept.

Nondistraction implies that when we simply sit not even a moment is lost in the space of self-envisioned reality. When we walk, we proceed unhindered in the intrinsic radiance of present awareness, just as the light of a lamp or the radiance of the sun is inseparable from what it illuminates. When we sleep, in the matrix of transparent presence, which cannot leave real space, creativity dissolves back into the ground, and all attributes are released as they stand – reality is the

ⁱ ‘Amitabha’ is translated into Tibetan either as ‘*Od dpag med* or *Srang ba mtha’ yas*, the light (*’od*) being identical to the appearance (*snang ba*).

ⁱⁱ This is the one mention of *togal* (*thod rgal*) in this tantra; ‘the great leapover’ refers to the fourth *togal* vision.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Appendix 3 for the four *tikas*.

great integrator. And when we wake, we awaken to the unstirring space of presence, shining naturally, nowhere crystalizing.

Best Beloved, listen well! No matter which of the four deportmentsⁱ we are engaged in, no departure from intrinsic radiance and no departure from the space of reality is possible. Just as a bird, wherever she flies, can never leave the sky; just as a fish, wherever she swims, can never leave the water; just as human beings, wherever they go, can never leave the earth; so the realized adept can never escape the real space of presence.

Best Beloved, only authentic buddha can be meditated upon, and that is nothing but your own intrinsic presence, dharmakaya. All events arise spontaneously with the five characteristics of pure presence: dharmakaya emptiness, intangibility, indivisibility, unreified wisdom that knows itself as such, and freedom from obstacles.ⁱⁱ

Those five characteristics occur in the five-colored light of present awareness. The five-colored light appears as the five families.ⁱⁱⁱ The five families appear as five sublime forms. In the five sublime forms, the five consorts remain unreified. In the five consorts, male and female bodhisattvas are unreified; the fields of sensory perception are represented by the female bodhisattvas and sense organs and consciousnesses are represented by the male bodhisattvas.

With all perception affixed with the seal of spontaneously arising presence, so that in self-envisioning present awareness no thought of anything extraneous is possible. Creative expression is re-enveloped by the ground at the very point of its incipient crystalization in the sublime vision of spontaneous release of all attributes.

At that juncture, the five sense fields are no longer confined by the five sense doors; the five sense doors are no longer confined by the male and female bodhisattvas; the bodhisattvas are no longer confined by the space of the five *yab-yum* sublime forms; the five *yab-yum*

ⁱ The four deportments – sitting, walking, sleeping and waking – are intended to subsume all activity (conduct).

ⁱⁱ See ‘five characteristics’ in GNT. These are distinct from the five attributes of pure presence: see chapter 12.

ⁱⁱⁱ The five families are represented by symbols: buddha, vajra, ratna, padma, and karma, each symbol subsuming a family of buddhas, each identified with one of the five colors.

sublime forms are no longer confined by the five-colored light of present awareness; the five-colored light is no longer confined by the five attributes of pure presence; and the five attributes of pure presence are no longer confined by its intrinsic clarity.

That is a secret precept defining the sensory process whereby, resting in the elemental matrix,⁴⁰ present awareness melts into spaciousness.

Thus released, present awareness never stirring from its own place, whatever is known is 'inserted into the vase'. Within this transparent vase of indivisible dharmakaya reality, awareness of presence shines like a butter lamp unagitated by the wind. In consequence, this secret precept that 'inserts whatever is known into the vase', infuses laziness, stupidity and sleep, and so on, with the wisdom that is essentially the ineffable zing of reality.

Everything that occurs arises out of itself; all perception emanates out of itself; and all is illuminated by itself.⁴¹ Inherently pure, whatever arises is released in its own intrinsic space; thus present awareness is spontaneous purity.

Furthermore, zero-appearance is nothing other than self-envisionment. Clouds, mist or vapor condensing, it all appears out of the sky; manifesting, it manifests in the sky; remaining, it remains in the sky; evaporating, it dissolves into the sky; released, it is released into the sky.

The forty-first chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches logically how both meditating and not meditating are mental functions and it teaches for those of middling acumen how to remain in continuous samadhi.

42. Nonmeditation and Meditation Instruction

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Teacher, Vajradharal Please elucidate meditation.

And the Teacher responded: Meditation is taught to lesser intellects. If we do not know nonmeditation, then unaware of our mental functions, ignorant of where effortlessness lies, we cannot experience continuous samadhi. If we do not know nonmeditation, we are no

different from common people in whom the ordinary mindstream is deluded.⁴²

Knowing the meaning of unpremeditated nonmeditation,⁴³ neither union with the sole buddha nor separation from it can arise. Knowing the meaning of unpremeditated meditation,⁴⁴ the habit of grasping at seemingly concrete reference points is abandoned. Realizing ultimate nonduality, all spatial and temporal bias is surrendered.

The teaching upon meditation is compressed into three sections: (1) the method of training, (2) the object of training and (3) the evaluation of training.

These are the three aspects of training: external, internal and secret.

1.1 Externally, body, speech and mind are relaxed. All activity abandoned, simply sit.

1.2 Internally, bind the energy channels. From the holistic light-seed of self-sprung spaciousness, first, corporeal potential manifests, and two channels united, one from above one from below, that union becomes the navel chakra. Fine bifurcating channels proliferate from it producing the lustrous glow⁴⁵ of the body. Within the heart and other organs, internal cavities are formed, and discursive thought is generated in those hollows.⁴⁶

Further, the eye being the primary sense faculty, whatever is visible is self-envisionment, and in the absence of discursive thought, the gaze is fixed. Although the manifestation may be prolific and dynamic, the self-dissolving creativity of presence is a constant. Creativity and the form that appears to be distinct from it, like hail and the wind that carries it, cannot be separated, so it is to be left as it is, and anyhow it is inexpressible. Do not reject the high velocity energy, because while it lasts discriminating or conceptual wisdom⁴⁷ expands with it. Sedulously letting it alone,⁴⁸ it abides in a natural thoughtless state.

⁴³ The distinction between unpremeditated nonmeditation and unpremeditated meditation may be restated as 'nonmeditation between sessions' and 'nonmeditation within sessions'. The latter is the central practice of the *Longchen Nyingtik*.

1.3 These are the three hidden aspects to the training: ‘the king is enthroned’; ‘the minister is imprisoned’; and ‘the subjects are the collateral damage’.

1.3.1 Vajradhara, listen carefully! The king is the pure presence of intrinsic presence, dharmakaya. His throne is naturally clear sky shining as a field of appearances, a glistening field of pixelsⁱ of spaciousness. The meaning here is that the primal ground, free of every last trace of solidity, is the seat of present awareness of immaculate spaciousness; in that way, the lamp of pure luminous mind is as clear and pellucid as still spring water.

Sitting there immobile, appearing to be part of the scenery, the king is like a hawk that builds a nest in a cliff and then stands sentinel at its entrance. That is how awareness of presence abides in the precious *tsitta*,ⁱⁱ the evidence of our own nature clearly manifest. It is like the mirror, the universal self-existent ground, and the transparent, ubiquitous, clarity of present awareness. That is why the ‘holistic light-seed of immaculate spaciousness’ is called ‘the water lamp’. As already mentioned, from the ultimate point of view perceptions of present awareness are clear light.

Sitting on that throne is the shining light of present awareness, which is the sole holistic light-seed of spontaneous awareness, and which never crystalizes. Presence is at the essence of awareness and, such awareness shining in presence, the light-seed of spontaneity overwhelms discursive thought as well as all that appears to be concrete. While that is unchanging, nothing other than self-envisionment is possible.

Now, that holistic light-seed of spontaneity, the momentary, all-embracing flash of light, is expressed in terms of the three aspects of its appearance,ⁱⁱⁱ which are all related; what is seen is the pure nature of space, which is its intrinsic brilliance;⁴⁹ what sees is the pure essence of that, which is the ‘water lamp’⁵⁰ – it is the radiance of the element

ⁱ ‘Pixels’ are *thig les* as conceived in the second togal vision: consider the analogy of a holographic pixel.

ⁱⁱ ‘*Tsitta*’ is the fleshly heart (*rin po che'i sha* or *tsitta'i sha*), skt: *chitta*; it is Mind or enlightened corporeality. See also chapter 83.

ⁱⁱⁱ The perceptible object (form), the subjective consciousness (formless), and the active body (desirous) are the three aspects of appearances (*snang ba gsum*).

earth in the now; and the field of appearances shines as pure presence, the radiant light of pure awareness.

Hear this! Naturally pure, intrinsic radiance is like the night sky. The radiance of pure reality in the now is like the sky at dawn. The radiant light of spontaneous awareness is like sunrise.

'The king enthroned' means that presence, pure in the now, remains unstirring in the changeless spaciousness of reality.

On account of the demon 'lord of death', the three energy channels that convey the breath of pristine awareness are 'squeezed'; since the vision of the tathagata has no definite end and since no sign or attribute is visible, the eyes gaze into the interior of the sky, and the entrance to the energy channels is constricted.

In the bodhisattva's samadhi, situated between buddha and sentient beings, eyes peer into space. The neck pulled down, the chin rests on the shoulder and the passage of energy in the three channels is inhibited.

In the meditative absorption and focusing fixation of gods and humans, attributes are more obdurate than in the previous two situations, and, therefore, less frangible. Their eyes are pointed at the earth; with the neck slightly bent, the chin is allowed to rest on the chest.

These three aspects show the way in which the king is enthroned and the method of his remaining on that seat. In that way, pure presence, analogous to the king, retains its primacy.

1.3.2 The minister is analogous to the relative mind, the intellect. So long as the creative energy¹ of pure presence does not escape, dependency is avoided and concepts are not formed. This unthinking state is analogous to the minister held in prison unable to indulge in political chicanery. The 'horse' exists in pure presence like breath inseparable from the body: it is as if the minister were imprisoned.⁵¹

¹ The Tibetan *rlung* (skt. prana, vayu) can also be translated as 'air', 'breath', 'wind', 'subtle energy', 'emotional disturbance', and 'neural disorder'.

1.3.3 The people are like the five senses – they are always creating karma. When ‘the minister is imprisoned,’ clarity is not conceptualized and ‘the people are controlled’.

2. Best Beloved, the ground of the training is real space, which is the nature of our essential inclusive identity.

Intrinsically pure space –
Then the space of pure reality is second;
And unthought, pure presence is the third.¹

Indivisible, unthought, empty nirvana,
Which is ‘unelaborated, real space’,
And the radiance of the four great elements
In the awareness of presence, these two,
Intrinsic incessant radiance of present awareness,
Its clear nature without visible appearance,
Essentially nonexistent emptiness,
Such indivisible essential inclusive identity,
That, simply, is awareness of presence in the now.

3. Then the evaluation of training: Such cognition is uninfluenced by cause and condition, and unaffected by circumstance; the flow of discursive conflicting thought is interrupted; and all consequences, all personal identities, are outshone.

Meditative heat arises inadvertently; and compounded or conditional phenomena revert to the universal buddhfield. Prophetic indications arise successively. Increasingly reliant upon the meaning of guru, deva and dakini, certainty regarding them arises in the mindstream.

The forty-second chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the vision that determines whether we should meditate or not and teaches the method of meditation.

43. Conduct

RTATSHTAVĀ

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please elucidate the different kinds of conduct.

¹ ‘These are the ‘three skies’, outer, inner and secret, relating to the *Longchen Nyingtik* togal practice.

The Teacher responded: Listen, Vajrapani! Action without discrimination, without acceptance or rejection, spontaneous action is the highest conduct the best activity is never performed deliberately.

Action in accordance with ultimate reality, appropriate action, has no substance, no particular characteristic, and as such is said to be just like space. Attributing no substance to the actor, the adept should know that the source of the action is immaculate and that it has no reactive effect. It is unreal, like space.

Awareness of presence behaves like a precious mirror. Intrinsic unreified awareness arises by itself, self-envisioned, without prejudice, with neither attraction nor aversion. In accordance with this view, the garuda glides through the sky moving without deliberate action, in spontaneous perfection. Ultimate conduct in accord with sublime vision is like the integral flow of the great river Ganges. Conduct in relation to fruition, like the sun and its shine, is enacted as trikaya in neither union nor separation.

Undistracted, with sublime vision, acting in the reality of nonconceptual impartial wisdom, that syndrome is the mental conduct of the adept. The verbal action of the adept is like a resounding echo, articulation without attachment to sounds. Physical, verbal and mental actions are all performed without fixation or attachment; all activity is perceived as an image in a mirror.

The adept's conduct is nonhabitual spontaneous action. Free of all convention, the adept may act like a mad elephant. Like a honeybee sucking on the stamen of flowers, he has no partiality towards any particular bloom.

The adept's behavior is compassionate behavior. Like the warmth of the sun, he acts for the benefit of all beings physically, energetically and mentally integrated. Converting them through his compassion, which is like a mother's love for an only child, the adept constantly acts for the sake of all sentient beings.

Nondual conduct: Such action is frictionless, it has no goal; it is nondeliberate, it has no purpose. Acting authentically, we change nothing.

The forty-third chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches conduct in brief.

44. Fruition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! What is the result of such conduct?

The Teacher said: Listen, Vajrapani! The result is that the view is manifest. The fruition is expressed as reality without outside or inside, and pervades as presence without outside or inside. It is nondual dharmakaya, the sublime vajra dimension, abiding in the real space of unfixating intrinsic clarity.

The intuitive wisdom of fruition is unimpeded awareness of presence in the sambhogakaya dimension of perfect enjoyment. The five vases (the five *yum*-consorts) holding present awareness are insubstantial appearances, like rainbows in the sky. Out of these vases, the five sublime forms of magical nirmanakaya emanation shine vividly. Implicit, unthought, radiance, like a butter-lamp in a vase, the interior clarity of trikaya is present as 'neither union nor separation'.

The transparent clarity therein together with the intrinsic radiance of presence, which are the two form dimensions, do not appear objectively; their unreified potential is present in neither union nor separation.

The unobstructed manifestation of, firstly, the two form dimensions as the nonexistence of existence, and, secondly, changeless dharmakaya as the existence of nonexistence, are like a bronze bowl and its contents or like a mirror and the images shining within it.

If appearances are empty of any intrinsic nature, they are void of all the limitations of substantiality. Conversely, if evanescence is their intrinsic nature, the biased nihilist view that their nature is vacuous emptiness is nugatory. Released from the four conceptual extremes, samsara is affixed with the seal of absence.ⁱ Unchanging in meaning, pure presence assumes its natural primacy.

The forty-fourth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the definitive teaching upon authentic ultimate fruition.

ⁱ Absence (*med pa*) is the first of the four Dzogchen samayas.

45. Approach to Buddha: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Please tell us the essence, the literal definition, the classification and the metaphors of ‘approach’.

The Teacher replied: Listen, Little Vajrapani! The essence of ‘approach’ is compassionate wisdom. The relative significance of the nine different approaches is reflected in their conventional order.

The literal definition of ‘approach’¹ is ‘carrier’ or ‘mover’.

Although many ways of approach present themselves, in essence there are two. The sutra-approach with overt signs takes causal relationship as the path; the tantric approach takes fruition to be the path.

The metaphor for the former is a boat (with which to cross over to the other side) and for the latter it is the foundation of a bridge (that identifies one side with the other).

The forty-fifth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel provides a short explanation of the meaning of approach to buddhahood.

46. View: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please teach us the view, meditation, conduct and fruition of the different approaches. Tell us the essence, the literal definition, and the category of each and provide a metaphor for each of the nine.

The Teacher responded: Best Beloved, the essence of each view should be understood as identical to its nominal meaning.

The definitive, ultimate, view is the essence of awareness of presence, namely, nonconceptual impartial wisdom.

¹ The word ‘approach’ is a translation of ‘yana’ (lit. vehicle) in Sanskrit (yana) and also in Tibetan ‘*theg pa*’.

As to its semantic definition, the ‘view’ is the authentic knowledge reached as the final holistic vision of any sadhana practice.ⁱ

These are the two types of view: authentic view and inauthentic view. The former is the atiyoga view. Inauthentic or, rather, provisional views are the anuyoga view and those beneath that.

‘Like the crystal and its light’ is the simile that describes the authentic view, while the similes below describe the eight provisional, inauthentic, views.

Listen, Best Beloved! The auditors (shravakas) and hermits (pratyekabuddhas) are like tiny fishes in a rivulet. The reality of the bodhisattvas is ‘apparent yet absent’, like the enchantment of *maya*, like the sky, floaters in visual field, the reflection of the moon in water and so on.ⁱⁱ The adept of kriya-tantra is likened to a servant attending his master; in yoga-tantra the adept is likened to a brother or a friend; in mahayoga the adept is like a king expanding his domain; in anuyoga the adept is likened to the single body of sexual union, and in atiyoga the adept is likened to a great garuda gliding across the sky.

Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please tell us the expressions that relate to the view.

The Teacher replied: In all the tantras and agamas we have given, wherever we use the expressions ‘view’, ‘final holistic vision’, ‘authentic’, ‘final view or ultimate view’, or ‘fruition’, you should know that they all refer to the view.

Great Bodhisattva Hero! When we talk about the person who grasps and what is grasped as two different entities, the view of the auditors (shravakas) is referred to. When we say that the grasper exists but what is grasped at has no substantial existence, the view of the hermits’ (pratyekabuddhas, self-realized/hermit buddha) is intended. When we talk about ‘mind’ and its ‘modes’, and ‘absolute and relative truth’,ⁱⁱⁱ we explain the view of bodhisattvas (tenderfoot buddha).

ⁱ Tib. *sgrub thabs*.

ⁱⁱ These are counted among the ‘eight metaphors of *maya*’: see GNT.

ⁱⁱⁱ In this translation, *don dam* (absolute) belongs to the dualism of absolute and relative, while *mtshar phyin* (ultimate) is beyond any dualism, such that relative and absolute are one.

When we assert the universal conformity of absolute truth, and a triad of types or buddha-families, we explain the view of kriya. The assertion of an equal pair is the view of upayoga. When the seven root sattvas⁵² are mentioned, yoga-tantra is indicated. When we talk about 'forty-two' and 'fifty-eight' buddha-deities and so on, we refer to the view of mahayoga. When we talk about 'unshakeable perfection', or 'spaciousness and present awareness', we explain the view of anuyoga. When we mention 'the end of deliberate effort', 'self-sprung present awareness', or 'spontaneously arising buddha in the now', we are referring to the view of The Great Perfection.

This is an abridged teaching.

The forty-sixth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the meaning of the view and terms that relate to it.

47. Meditation: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please explain the difference between sublime vision and meditation.

The Teacher responded: Listen, Vajrapani! Here are the essence, semantic definition, categories, metaphors and many explanations of meditation.

The essence of meditation is simple one-pointed soft-focused abiding.ⁱ

It has four different semantic descriptions: meditation as visualization of the absolute; meditation as nondistraction; meditation as absorption in ultimate inseparability; meditation as familiarization, habituation and nonproliferation.

Then these are the two categories of meditation: meditation with and without attributes. That without attributes is again of two types: the meditative method of total freedom from effort, and meditation

ⁱ 'One pointed' here is 'one pointed soft focus', which is a condition of neither relaxation nor concentration, but literally intensive.

requiring effort. Meditation with attributes is also of two kinds: briefly, the creative and the fulfillment phases.ⁱ

These are the four similes for meditation: meditation is 'like trimming the wick of a butter lamp', 'like mixing water and milk', 'like a sparkling-water stone'⁵³ⁱⁱ and like a butter-lamp in a vase.

Master of the Secret, listen well! Wherever we talk about 'sublime vision', the implication is that through meditation meditative absorption is naturally present, undistracted, undiffused and without separation. Wherever 'simply abiding', familiarization and habituation occur, the implication is that the underlying function of meditative absorption is in play.

The forty-seventh chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel defines and explains meditation.

48. Nonmeditation: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Please explain the meaning of 'nonmeditation'.

The Teacher said: Vajrapani, listen! Here are the essence, the semantic definition, the categories, and metaphors of nonmeditation as well as phrases relevant to its expression.

The essence of nonmeditation is uninterrupted intrinsic presence. As for its semantic meaning, it is called 'nonmeditation' because it entails no mental process. Inseparable from real space, no external or internal action is necessary.

ⁱ Creative (*skyes rim*) and fulfillment stages (*rdzogs rim*) relate to mahayoga and anuyoga respectively.

ⁱⁱ The water-stone (*nor bu chu dwangs* or *mdangs*) is the ketaka gem which clarifies water.

Nonmeditation is of two kinds: nonmeditation with attribute and nonmeditation without any attribute. Each of these is subdivided into two: authentic nonmeditation and conceptual nonmeditation.

Nonmeditation cannot be interrupted.ⁱ The simile for unintermittible nonmeditation is 'like a river'. Nonmeditation is inseparable from pure meaning, as sweetness is from honey. Nonmeditation is clear in itself like the radiance of the sun.

Master of the Secret! Whenever you hear the following phrases recited from my tantras and agamas understand them according to the teaching on nonmeditation. These phrases are 'concentrated abiding redundant', 'nothing to accomplish', 'neither union nor separation', 'the brilliant space⁵⁴ of all-inclusive identity', 'absence of union or separation in the now', 'beyond any deliberate effort', 'no path to traverse', 'realization of manifest buddha', 'self-sprung all-inclusive awareness', 'spontaneously arising buddha in the now', 'freedom from points of reference' and 'nonmeditation without mental support'.

The forty-eighth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches a short explanation of nonmeditation with a brief elucidation of terms.

49. Conduct: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan, Master of Skillful Means, please explain the meaning of 'conduct'.

The Teacher said: Listen, Master of the Secret! We are going to explain to you the meaning of 'conduct',ⁱⁱ condensing that meaning under the headings of essence, literal meaning, types, metaphors and application of the term.

The essence of conduct is related to the meaning of an indefinable authentic 'doer'. Its literal meaning in the Tibetan language is 'harmonizing and enjoying'.

ⁱ Nonmeditation without attribute cannot be interrupted because it has neither beginning nor end.

ⁱⁱ 'Conduct' is also 'action' and 'behavior' (*spyod pa* -charya).

These are the two kinds of conduct: discriminating conduct based on dogmatic acceptance and rejection, and nondiscriminatory conduct. The metaphors for such modes of conduct are a supple imaginative dancer and a clever craftsman making a handmade item, respectively.¹

Master of the Secret! In all the tantras and agamas we have given, wherever the term ‘conduct’ appears, whether it relates to ‘selfless action’ or to ordinary behavior, for adepts of the highest, moderate and modest capacity, or to ground, path and fruition, it is to be understood according to what we have taught here.

The forty-ninth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel presents a short teaching on conduct.

50. Fruition: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please teach us the meaning of ‘fruition’.

The Teacher responded: Vajrapani, listen! We are going to tell you the definitive meaning of ‘fruition’, condensing it under the headings of essence, semantic definition, categories, metaphor and applications of the term.

The essence of fruition is the complete actualization of a particular view. Its semantic meanings are ‘release’, ‘maturation’, ‘perfection’, ‘completion’ and ‘irreversibility’. These are the two kinds of ‘fruition’: contaminated and uncontaminated. The first implies gradual ripening and the second instantaneous perfection. The ripening of fruit or grain is the metaphor for the first and the fruit of the udumbara² for the second.

Master of the Secret, listen! In all the tantras and agamas we have given, wherever we use the expression ‘fruition’ or ‘goal’ or ‘result’, you should understand it according to this teaching. These different expressions relate to fruition: ‘completion’, ‘perfection’, ‘maturation’, ‘accomplishment’, ‘release’, ‘irreversibility’ and so on. The nature of

¹ These two metaphors appear to have become reversed in placement.

² The fruit of the udumbara, like all types of fig, contains the flower.

any particular fruition should be understood according to the definitions we have taught here, including 'arhatship' all the way to 'assuming primacy'.

The fiftieth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel presents an extensive explanation of fruition.

51. The Nine Approaches: Definitions

Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please tell us the meaning and names of the nine approaches, complete with their view, meditation and action.

The Teacher responded: Now we shall teach the definition of the specific names for the approaches, so listen carefully!

The definition of 'auditor' (shravaka) is one who listens to the teacher's words with his auditory sense and hears their meaning with his intellectual power. But since intrinsic presence does not arise from within him, he is dependent upon the words of the teacher.

The definition of hermit or hermit-buddha (pratyekabuddha) is one who awakens by himself by virtue of his meditation practice, independent of another's teaching.

The semantic definition of 'bodhisattva' is one who with perfect self-abnegation, present awareness, compassion and ideal conduct demonstrates selflessness to others.

The definition of 'kriya-tantra adept' is one who professes the crucial importance of ritual bathing, chastity and astrology.

The definition of 'upa-tantra adept' is one in whom the significance of ritual action decreases and the view increases.

The definition of 'yoga-tantra adept' is one who trains in the four modes of the four families, purifying physical, energetic and mental complexes and, thus, working for others.

The definition of 'mahayoga adept' is one who takes the buddha-teacher's indications as primary and engages in the yoga of skillful means and wisdom and the three samadhis.

The definition of ‘anuyoga adept’ is one who engages in uncultivated, natural, perfection.ⁱ

The definition of ‘Dzogchen adept’, the adept of natural perfection, is one who embraces all the events of existence in the nondual manner as perfect buddha in the now in dharmakaya.

The fifty-first chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the reasoned semantic meaning of the names of the nine approaches.

52. The Eight Approaches: Superiority

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! How are the nine approaches superior one to the other?

The Teacher responded: Listen, Vajrapani! Auditors (shravakas) are superior to those who do not comprehend – or who miscomprehend – their experience. How are they superior? Their view is superior because they realize the absence of personal identity. Their conduct is superior because they keep to the ten virtues,ⁱⁱ although only for their own sake. Their practice is superior because it is based on the four noble truths.ⁱⁱⁱ Their fruition is superior because their attainment is one of the four pairs of superior beings on the path to arhatship.

Hermits (pratyekabuddhas) are superior to auditors (shravakas). Their view is superior because they realize the emptiness of the personal component of body-mind make-up,^{iv} a partial insight, and also the emptiness of the empty ground of mental activity. Their conduct is superior because besides engaging in the ten virtues, they can help others by their incongruous magical transformations. Their practice is

ⁱ This implies practicing the fulfillment phase without first completing the mahayoga creative phase (*ma bskeyed rdzogs pa*).

ⁱⁱ The ten virtues are forsaking killing, theft, sexual misconduct, lying, cursing, gossip, slander, opinionatedness, covetousness and malice.

ⁱⁱⁱ The four noble truths are the Buddha’s truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, release from suffering and the path of release.

^{iv} Of the name and form aggregate (rupa-skandha, *ming dang grugs gyi phung po*), part of the form aspect belongs to the objective pole of perception and part to the subjective aspect. It is the personal aspect that is referred to here.

superior because they realize fruition by virtue of their meditative practice without relying on an existential master. Their superiority in fruition is indicated by the metaphors 'parrot' and 'rhinoceros'.

Bodhisattvas are superior to hermits. Their view is superior because they have realized the absence of any substantiality in both subjective and objective aspects of perception. Their conduct is superior since they act for the sake of others through the four boundless qualities and the four socially magnetizing activities. Their practice is superior because they accomplish the ten perfections.ⁱ Their fruition is superior because they master the bodhisattva stage of Universal Light.

Kriya-tantra adepts are superior to bodhisattvas. Their view is superior because they understand the absolute as unborn, and they consider the awareness-deity and relative self as lord and subject respectively. Their conduct is superior because they perform the three purities.ⁱⁱ Their practice is superior because it is based on habitual contemplation, transformation and blessing. Their fruition is superior because they have attained the three families.

Upa-tantra adepts are superior to those of kriya-tantra. Their view is superior because they consider the buddha-deity and themselves as master and servant. Their conduct is superior because they act for the sake of wandering beings without reference to criteria. Their practice is superior because accomplishment is based in the primal ground itself. Their fruition is superior because they accomplish the four families.

Yoga-tantra adepts are superior to those of upa-tantra. Their view is superior because they consider the relative self as the awareness-deity's friend. Their conduct is superior because they perform the four selfless activities. Their fruition is superior because they actualize the buddha of the four families.

ⁱ 'The ten gone to the far side', 'ten consummations': To the six perfections of the prajnaparamita-yana (generosity, morality, patience, perseverance, meditative absorption, and wisdom) are added in Vajrayana four more: skillful means (upaya), aspiration (pranidhana), power (bala) and present awareness (jnana).

ⁱⁱ The three purities are deity and mandala, substances and enjoyment, mantra and samadhi.

Mahayoga adepts are four times superior to those of yoga-tantra. Their view is superior because they consider their body to be the buddha-deity's mandala. Their conduct is superior because they act for the sake of beings through the two practices of union and deliverance.ⁱ Their practice is superior because it is based on both skillful means and wisdom. Their fruition is superior because they attain the bodhisattva stage of Universal Light.

Anuyoga adepts are superior to practitioners of mahayoga in four ways. Their view is superior because they realize the nonduality of spaciousness and present awareness. Their conduct is superior because they act in the spaciousness of present awareness and in the spaciousness of enjoyment of present awareness. Their practice is superior because they meditate upon the five body-mind aggregates and the five great elements as the five *yab-yum* couples. Their fruition is superior because they attain the stage of the Desireless Lotus.

Atiyoga adepts are superior to anuyoga adepts in four ways. Their view is superior because they consider all actual and possible worlds as dharmakaya. Their conduct is superior because the ultimate good of wandering beings is achieved by intrinsic dharmakaya blessing. Their practice is superior because they act without any directed or deliberate effort. Their fruition is superior because they master the stages from the thirteenth, the Great Assembly,ⁱⁱ to the twenty-first.ⁱⁱⁱ

Best Beloved! Whatever distinctions are made regarding relative superiority of achievement, or 'great' and 'small', 'higher' and 'lower', in any of the tantras and agamas we have given, they should be understood according to the above explanation.

The fifty-second chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the relative order of the eight approaches and the superiority of the ninth.

ⁱ This refers to symbolic tanagana (*sbyor sgroh*): see chapter 76.

ⁱⁱ For the fifteen stages including the Desireless Lotus (*ma chags padma can*) and the Great Assembly (*'khor lo tshogs chen*), which is the forerunner of the mahaganachakra (*tshogs 'khor chen po*), see chapter 75.

ⁱⁱⁱ The eight extra stages indicated here incorporate a stage of perfect Dzogchen attainment for each of the eight lesser approaches.

53. The Supreme: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Omniscient Conqueror, All-Knower! Please explain the meaning of 'supreme'.

The Teacher responded: Listen to our explanation of the supreme. It consists of four parts: essence, semantic definition, ordered categories and a metaphor.

The essence of the supreme is the highest, the absolute.

As for the rational semantic meaning, the supreme is 'unlocatable', 'nonabiding', but nevertheless it is accepted as existent by convention.

These are the two kinds of supreme: temporal, mutable supreme and immutable, ultimate supreme. Both kinds have four subcategories: view, conduct, success and fruition

The metaphor for the supreme is a nine-storied stupa, the eight approaches undivided, complete and perfect in the real space of Ati.ⁱ

Although in the wisdom indivisible from the nondual dharmakaya no duality of good and bad, large and small, high and low can exist, the distinctions that are made here are taught as a method of leadingⁱⁱ the conditioned mind.

The fifty-third chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the meaning of the supreme.

54. Fivefold Supremacy

Then the Master of the Most Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please teach us the highest supremacy⁵⁵ and its varieties.

The Teacher responded: Vajrapani, listen! Temporal, mutable supremacy belongs to the eight individual approaches. There are five

ⁱ Ati or Maha Ati denotes Dzogchen; in the *Tiklay Kunsel*, Dzogchen refers only to atiyoga, excluding mahayoga and anuyoga.

ⁱⁱ Provisional precepts 'lead' the rational mind to its own demise.

aspects to ultimate supremacy, and each of the five has 'five excellences', inalienable, in neither union nor separation in the now.

The five supremacies are the supremacy of buddha manifest; the supremacy of buddha as spaciousness by virtue of its attribute of fivefold location in spaciousness; the supremacy of essential identity by virtue of the five intrinsic perfections of the all-embracing self; the supremacy of very buddha itself by virtue of the five transcendent methods of its establishment; the supremacy of all-buddha by virtue of the paramountcy of the five stainless aspects. Those are the five types of ultimate supremacy.

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! What is the supremacy of buddha manifest?

The Teacher responded:

The egoless dimension is the excellent Teacher;
Awareness of presence is the excellent teaching;
The indefinable mandala is the excellent location;
The five inert sublime forms are the excellent retinue;
And spontaneity in the now is the excellent time.

Then Vajrapani made this request: What is the supremacy of buddha as spaciousness?

The Teacher responded:

On the throne of the dharmakaya mandala,
As the light-seed of immaculate spaciousness,
Buddha is a union of five attributes.

Unchanging, immutable spaciousness,ⁱ
Pure potential amassed in jeweline spaciousness,
Consisting of five vases of radiant awareness,
Buddha is unborn in this uncrystalizing matrix.

In neither union nor separation in real space
The five great elements – earth, water, fire, air and space –
Shining as the creativity of fivefold awareness,
Buddha in the now is fivefold reality.

ⁱ The vajradhatu (*rdo rje dbyings*).

Seat of fivefold awareness and trikaya,
Buddha is supreme in its all-pervasiveness,
And supreme in immaculate earth, water, fire and air.

Vajrapani then asked: What is the supremacy of buddha as essential identity?

And the Teacher replied:

The vessel of fivefold elemental emanation,
The fivefold reality self-sprung,
In action a field of intelligent skillful means,
Immaculate, without subject or object,
That is the supremacy of buddha manifest as essential identity.

The five body-mind aggregates appear
And shine as the jewel light of the five families,
And effortless spontaneity in the now;
Self-envisionment of present awareness,
Such is supreme essential identity.

The eight consciousnesses expressed
As the eight male bodhisattvas, perfect in themselves,
Self-envisioning, nothing extrinsic – that is supreme!
The nature of the eight objects of consciousness
Expressed as the eight female bodhisattvas,
Effortless spontaneity in the now,
Self-envisionment of present awareness –
Such is supreme essential identity.

This object-less all-inclusive seamless self-envisionment,¹
Unreachable omnipresence – that is supreme!
Unobjectifiable, because it is itself
Arising from itself, arising within itself,
It is intrinsic radiance, unobjectifiable;
And being innate, it is not to be sought or pursued.

Spontaneously completed, without striving,
Self-envisionment is perfect;
Unable to define itself and beyond deliberate effort,
Self-envisionment is perfect;
Neither unitary nor separate from its realization
Self-envisionment is perfect;
Since nothing is done on an unchanging stage,

¹ See chapter 1.

Self-envisionment is perfect;
Its untraversed path unimaginable,
Essential identity is perfect in its inclusivity.

Envisionment is the essential identity of all experience,
And as 'essential all-embracing identity'
It is unknown to followers of the lower approaches.

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: What is the supremacy of the very buddha itself?

The Teacher responded:

Established as the highest supreme,
Confirmed by the infallible fourfold symbolic pointing out,ⁱ
Confirmed by trikaya in neither union nor separation,
Confirmed by the evidence of the lamp of present awareness,
Its supremacy established by these three confirmations,ⁱⁱ
It is also supreme by virtue of the fivefold excellence of the manifest buddha.

Then Vajrapani made this request: What is the supremacy of all-buddha?

The Teacher responded:

Dharmakaya is changeless intrinsic presence,
Indeterminable, beyond thought:
As nonmeditation it is supreme.

In diaphanous, transparent dharmakaya,
No imaginable object exists:
As nonduality it is supreme.

In the peace of diaphanous presence,
No concrete objects or attributes exist:
As ubiquitous effulgence, it is supreme.

Ultimate nondual intrinsic presence, dharmakaya,
Cannot be indicated without bias:
Utterly ineffable, it is supreme.

ⁱ The four are Vajrasattva's mirror, a mirror-image, the eyeball and the sun:
see chapter 86 and GNT.

ⁱⁱ See 'three confirmations' in GNT.

Dharmakaya, self-sprung awareness,
Uncaused and unconditioned, is uncompounded:
In its immutability, it is supreme.⁵⁶

Intrinsic presence free of the five impuritiesⁱ is all-buddha in the now.

The fifty-fourth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the highest supremacy.

55. Deviations and Obscurations

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! You have spoken about the various nine approaches in terms of what is to be converted. Now, what are the deviations and obscurations of the approaches?

The Teacher said: Listen well, Vajrapani! An incalculable number of deviations and obscurations are possible in the nine approaches, but in summary, there are thirty-six.

Relating to view, meditation, enjoyment and fruition, practicing the three sutra-approaches with signs, thirty-two, thirty-six and thirty-eight deviations respectively may arise. The twelve deviations are comprised of the eight and the four.ⁱⁱ

The three outer tantric classes have an equal number of deviations and obscurations: meditation has seventeen occlusions, twelve obscurations and twelve deviances or downfalls.ⁱⁱⁱ

In the two inner tantric classes many possible deviations arise and as many as thirty-two and twenty-eight, respectively, can be counted. Regarding obscurations, six are reckoned.⁵⁷

In the sole holistic light-seed of the great perfection,

ⁱ The five impurities (*dri ma lnga*) are, perhaps, the five affective emotions.

ⁱⁱ These relate to the monk's pratimoksha vows.

ⁱⁱⁱ The 17, 12 and 12 faults here and the 32 and 28 in the next paragraph enumerate samaya commitments.

Deviation cannot be distinguished from nondeviation;
All deviation by nature is immaculate;
The unique stand-alone light-seed is all-embracing.

In the view, meditation, action and fruition of Ati,
Already nondual in the now,
Glitches and veils cannot obtrude.

Since view, meditation, action and fruition,
Occupy present awareness of the now,
Adventitious glitches and veils are impossible.

The view, meditation, enjoyment and fruition
Of The Great Perfection is spontaneity,
So deviations and obscurations generated
By the hopes and fears of success in meditation,
Abide immaculate, intrinsically pure.

No-one and nothing is over and above us –
We are clear awareness unveiled.
The eight approaches manifesting below us –
They are all our compassionate invention.

Undivided wisdom is intrinsically present;
Perfect awareness is free of interference:
Deviation is immaculate, pure and empty.

Since undivided wisdom is intrinsic clarity,
Glitches and veils cannot dualize its radiance.

The fifty-fifth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the deviations and obscurations of the eight approaches and atiyoga's freedom from them.

56. Deviation and Obscuration: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara, please tell us the meaning of 'deviation and obscuration'!

The Teacher replied: Listen, Vajrapani! We are going to give you the essential meaning, the semantic meaning, illustrative metaphors and synonyms.

The essence of deviation and obscuration is diminished presence. As for the semantic meaning, obscuration is failure to see the higher reality, while deviation is to act according to a lower approach. That is the definition of 'deviation and obscuration'.

Many different types of deviations and obscurations arise, but, in brief, there are four: those relating respectively to view, meditation, action and fruition. Each of those four has two divisions: deviation and obscuration.

As for the simile for deviation and obscuration, it is like having business in the north yet setting out towards the south, and having gone towards the south failing to accomplish the intended purpose in the north. Aspiring to a high reality, yet acting according to a lower approach, the higher is invisible from below.

Best Beloved, in all the tantras and agamas we have given, whenever we say 'mistake', it is to be understood in terms of deviation and obscuration. Whenever we talk about 'misunderstanding' or 'absence of realization', it is to be understood in terms of deviation and obscuration. Whenever we use the phrases 'going astray', 'sidetracked' or 'obscured', that implies deviation and obscuration. When we say 'absence of deviation and obscuration', pure presence is implied.

Moreover, the interior meaning, the threefold underlying structure, as taught in this *Circle of Total Illumination*, is relevant here.⁵⁸

The fifty-sixth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel provides an explanation of the meaning of deviation and obscuration and synonyms in short.

57. A Petition

The treasure chest of buddha speech thrown open, a clear and bright lamp, a secret precept was revealed elucidating the meaning of 'king, minister and subjects' and dispelling darkness:

TANTRA A NU U PA YA NA KA LAM SĀDHA

At that time, Bhagawan entered the samadhi of the paramount secret.

And the Master of the Secret implored him: Bhagawan, All-illuminating Presence! If those chapters (51 and 52) contained the common definitions of the approaches and their intrinsic purposes, please explain the specific purposes of the tantras, agamas and upadeshas. What are the necessary components of a tantra? What is the ulterior meaning of phrases like 'the stages not to be purified', 'paths not to be traversed' and 'perfections not to be practiced' that are found in the tantras?

What is the so-called 'hollow' or 'interiority'? What does 'appearances' mean? What is the 'field of appearances'? What are the four kinds of robes?ⁱ What is the so-called 'direct introduction' or 'pointing out'? What is the mind and what is present awareness? What is the bardo, or 'intermediate state'? What is release and what is confinement? What is 'the eye'?

What is 'fivefold completion and perfection'? What are the types of compassion? How is nirvana? How do we refute our adversaries' contentions? How do we burn out the seeds of karmic propensity?

The fifty-seventh chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel is a petition.

58. The Five Excellences

Then the Teacher said: Vajrapani, listen well! Tantra can be explicated in terms of the five excellences. The five excellences are of three kinds: excellences of dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya.

The five excellences are the Teacher, the teaching, the retinue, the place and the time. In dharmakaya, the five excellences are the Teacher as changelessness; the teaching as *The Eternal Victory Banner*ⁱⁱ (the five great tantras of secret presence); the assembled retinue (not other than the Teacher himself) as the lightform of five sugatas of the five families; the place as the uncreated, unstructured field of spaciousness; and the occasion is the great time, which transcends past and future.

ⁱ The robes indicate the ordinations of monks and nuns and yogins and yoginis.

ⁱⁱ See *Mi nub rgyal mtshan*, Appendix 3.

With these five excellences, the implicit, nonconceptual Teacher communicates his waves of grace, while the five aspects of sambhogakaya, not other than that Teacher, communicate each his own great tantra through his own waves of grace.

Then the Teacher explained the five excellences of sambhogakaya: The Teacher manifests as the sugatas of the five families; the teaching is the five great secret tantras; the assembled retinue is composed of male and female bodhisattvas; the venue is the immeasurable matrix of light; the occasion is the arising of pure presence in the field of appearances.

Without uttering a word, or even a sound, the Teachers communicate through their sublime form. The Sugata Vairochana communicates the great tantra of sublime form through his very being to the four sublime forms surrounding him. The Bhagawan Akshobhya conveys the great tantra of buddha mind through his very being to the mandala of the vajra family. The Bhagawan Ratnasambhava communicates the great tantra of immanent qualities through his very being to male and female bodhisattvas of the ratna family. The Bhagawan Amitabha conveys the great tantra of buddha speech through his very being to male and female bodhisattvas of the padma family. The Bhagawan Amoghasiddhi conveys the great tantra of selfless activity through his very being to male and female bodhisattvas of the karma family.

Thus, compassionate vision emanates not as verbal explanation, since no one is there to listen, but as fivefold present awareness. The gaze of the principal, Vairochana, is evident as fivefold present awareness; and those sublime forms expound through their very being and by their samadhi vision.

Then the Teacher explained the five excellences of nirmanakaya: The quintessential oral teaching of the five great secret tantras, with all their outer, inner and secret summations, are disclosed by supreme wisdom in the matrix of compassion, rolled up by the breath of awareness into the vase of the throat, arranged clearly and distinctly on the tongue in the mouth, and uttered in different meaningful words from between the teeth.

Tantra is revealed as poetic composition with its sixty qualities of melodious speech. The image of the effortless flight of the great garuda restates its essential message. The tiger's forward leap illustrates its progress through stages of untruth. The turtle's gait

illustrates the manner in which verbal constructs are treated. With a sound like the lion's vibrant roar, it overwhelms the eight lower approaches. Moreover, its secret precepts are served like a mother hawk feeding her young.

Upon the assembled hosts of the seven buddhas,¹
Falls the rain of elixir in the three divine hollows,
The three planes of the supreme Lotus Heights.

The fifty-eighth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the five excellences.

59. The Five Excellences: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara, please explain to us the meaning of those five excellences and their intended purpose.

The Teacher responded: Listen, Vajrapani! We shall explain to you the essence, the semantic meaning, the types and the metaphors of 'excellence'.

First, the essence of 'excellence' is a combination of causal factors. The semantic definition is 'a propitious junction of causes and conditions'. In what way is it excellent? It is 'excellent' because all the requisites are present. That is a rational explanation of its semantic meaning. Its categories are taught in the previous chapter.

Its simile is 'like the king, the minister and the people consulting whenever and wherever they congregate'. However, that metaphor provides only part of the meaning.

Vajrapani made this request: What is the purpose of talking about the five excellences? What fault is incurred by not teaching them?

The Teacher replied: The purpose of talking about the excellence of the Teacher is to arouse confidence that the teaching derives from the

¹The Seven Successive Buddhas are Vipasvi, Sikhi, Visvabhu, Krakuchanda, Kanakamuni, Kasyapa, and Sakyamuni.

mouth of buddha, from a pure source of indisputable truth, and not from an average person with analytic intelligence.

The purpose of talking about the excellence of the teaching is to arouse confidence that it is not just babble, but on the contrary highly meaningful speech.

The purpose of talking about the excellence of the retinue is to arouse confidence that the teaching is common to them all and that the teaching is definitely spoken by the Teacher.

The purpose of talking about the excellence of a specific place is to arouse confidence that the quintessence is taught nowhere but at that present particular place.

The purpose of talking about the excellence of the occasion is to arouse confidence that neither previous nor later opportunities can occur, that each occasion is unique but equal to all others, equal and then forgotten.

The fifty-ninth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the meaning and purpose of the five excellences.

60. The Style of the Tantras

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara, how is the precious teaching communicated?

The Teacher replied: *The Swirling Lotus* is a tantra of sublime form, arranged according to outer, inner and secret meanings, with an internal structure of three streams – natural perfection, delusion, and reversion of delusion – communicating like precious gems threaded on a string.ⁱ

The Vajra Peak Epitome is a great tantra of buddha speech, flawlessly explicating the internal structure of all tantras, communicating an all-inclusive vision, like releasing the fetters of a horse or opening a padlock.

ⁱ See Appendix 3 for notes on the texts listed here.

The Heap of Jewels is the great tantra of buddha mind, presenting the internal structure of the view composed flawlessly, communicating like a great garuda gliding effortlessly across the sky.

Fashioning Loving Kindness is the great tantra of immanent quality, combining all manner of expression of the general nature of quality, communicated by analogy to a perfect crystal stupa.

The Sun of the Clear Sky is the great tantra of selfless activity, setting up the general framework for effortless spontaneous selfless action, explaining the faults of deviation and obscuration in great detail.

Paramount Present Awareness is a great tantra of Secret Precept material containing the essence of the view that communicates the outshining of concretely characterized phenomena.

Churning the Depths of Samsara presents the nub of the view containing the guts of seven veils and seven symbols. It communicates the resolution of the essence, its primacy resumed.

The Cross-Necked Peacocks contains Secret Precept material that fully explicates the interior matter of sublime vision and meditation, and the pros and cons of meditation according to mental capacity, arranged by topic and in proper order.

The Light of Spontaneity contains Secret Precept material about the form dimension, and fully explicates the interior matter of the dimension of present awareness and the mode of being and the mode of appearances in an impeccable fashion.

The Great Tantra of the Four Sons and Mothers is an incisive tantra that communicates and explicates the essential nature of each.

Secret Awareness is a key to all tantra, fully disclosing all and everything, and concentrating it into a nondual unity.

Compendium of Sublime Vision is a great tantra of Secret Precept, disclosing all outer, inner and secret precept, communicating and explicating the three topics of symbol, sound and certainty.

The Universal Treasury is the great treasury of the Mind Series, contextualizing the four ways of explanation, and communicating directly the four connections.¹

The Essential Tantra of Vajradakini, contextualized by the meaning of the perfect, great empowerment, fully explicates the vision in word and meaning, communicating buddha-fruition already attained.

The Four Series of Manjushri, the sovereign tantra, explicating the topics of outer, inner and secret tantras, communicates with unalloyed clarity.

The Four Tika Commentaries on the secret precept level, contextualizing the four significant attributes⁵⁹ relating to the extensive and brief introduction to the nature of mind, communicates release in three moments or in one moment.

The Precious Garland is a sovereign transmission, communicating, with a historical overview, the salient meanings of all Secret Precept without exception.

The sixtieth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the method of transmitting the precious teaching

61. Tantra: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara, What is your teaching on tantra?

The Teacher responded: Here are the essence, the literal meaning, the types and metaphors of ‘tantra’.

The essence of ‘tantra’ is twofold, verbal and experiential. The essence of the latter, the continuum of reality, implies spontaneous awareness of presence. Verbal tantras are basic stand-alone texts⁶⁰ fulfilling

¹ These four attributes are, perhaps, complete manifest connection with all aspects; apex connection; graduated connection; and instantaneous connection.

necessary requirements, as well as volumes of scripture revealed as strings of words.

'Tantra' has five semantic definitions: tantra is 'connection' (continuity), 'nothing lacking', 'perfect completion', 'agitation' and 'excellence'.

The two types of tantra, conventional and experiential, are to be known according to the explanation above.

The metaphor for 'connection' is a net; for 'nothing lacking' the metaphor is a magical jewel; for 'perfect completion' the metaphor is a wish-fulfilling tree; for 'agitation' the metaphor is the introduction of the woof to the warp of a weaving.⁶¹

Those are the meanings of 'tantra'.

The sixty-first chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel elucidates the attributes of tantra.

62. Empowerment

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan, please elucidate the requisites of the tantras.

The Teacher replied: Vajrapani, listen well! The requisites of a tantra are tenfold: empowerment and commitment taught as a pair; the two aspects of mandala; worship (puja) and union (yoga) as a pair; mantra and mudra as a pair; and approach and accomplishment as a pair.ⁱ

Vajrapani! Empowerment is taught in three ways: firstly, its perfection in the primal ground; secondly, eventuation of synchronicitous empowerment; and thirdly the ritual empowerment.

Firstly, empowerment is already complete and perfect in the primal ground:

ⁱ The following nine chapters elucidate the ten requisite components of tantra defined in accordance with the Dzogchen view.

Within changeless unthought dharmakaya,
 In its aspect of omniscient awareness,
 In itself invisible, it appears shining
 As sublime form of jeweline radiance,
 No other than the four streams of empowerment.ⁱ
 Unsought, unconferred,
 Empowerment is replete in the primal ground.

The gnostic compassion of the five sublime forms,
 Represented as the five blood-drinking herukas,
 Is comprised of the four streams of empowerment.
 Unsought, unconferred,
 Empowerment is replete in the primal ground.

Itself self-envisioned present awareness,
 Itself abiding in real space, released in real space,
 All-inclusive awareness is the four streams of empowerment.
 Unsought, undiscovered,
 Empowerment is replete in the primal ground.

The essence of illustrative buddha speech,
 The five precious seed syllables,ⁱⁱ
 Abiding in the now, in the unsought primal ground,
 These are the four streams of empowerment
 Of the five seed syllables of the five male consorts.
 Unsought, unconferred,
 Empowerment is replete in the primal ground.

Present awareness of the primal ground is not dependent upon anything or anybody; it has no cause, and circumstance does not affect it.

Secondly, Best Beloved, Here is the eventuation of synchronicitous empowerment:⁶²

The four empowerments, complete and perfect in the primal ground, are present in the Tathagata Vairochana's awareness, which is the receptacle of its five sublime forms. The unmitigated strength of

ⁱ These four may be the outer stream of tantra, the inner stream of mastery, the ritual practice stream of renown, and the secret stream of perfection (from the Rangjung Yeshe Dictionary).

ⁱⁱ OM AH HUNG HRI TRAM are the seed syllables of the five pawo (*dpa' bo lnga*).

simple cognition is synchronicitous with the empowerment of nonconceptual wisdom in the unchanging ground that is dharmakaya.

As to the four sublime forms of that undivided wisdom, when they arise as what is converted – still not different from Vairochana himself – the sublime vision of buddha mind is known directly in a face to face gaze. From the five sublime forms of the wisdom of presence,ⁱ empowerment falls naturally. In the same way, the male and female bodhisattvas are empowered by the four families' fourfold buddha.

At the time of our emanation as tulku in the dimension of magical nirmanakaya, at the time of ripeness and completion, abiding naturally in the matrix of buddha mind, ignorance dispelled, empowermentⁱⁱ is attained instantly with realized awareness.

Accordingly, since all beings of the three worlds have the four empowerments complete and perfect in their mindstream, our self-fulfilling prediction is that, synchronistically, they will all attain mastery of creative expression.

Thirdly, Vajrapani, listen well! These are the two ways of conferring this the principal empowerment:

The first (3.1) is through the empowerment that, depending upon wisdom, employs the four special ritual objects,ⁱⁱⁱ which is also called 'the empowerment of the creative presence of the perfect ground';⁶³ and the second (3.2) is the empowerment of the same name that uses common symbolic objects and is conferred and received by relying upon the vajra master's instruction.

3.1 The Great Perfection's Fourfold Empowerment of Creative Presence: The empowerment using the four special ritual objects depending upon wisdom.

3.1.1 Fivefold Vase Empowerment. This entails initiation into the emptiness of the tantra continuum. Within the real space of the immaculate fivefold space-matrix, the *yum*-consort's unimpeded eye of

ⁱ The phrase *shes rab rig pa* here identifies wisdom (*shes rab*) with pure presence (*rig pa*), an identity that has been implied throughout, although pure presence is the larger concept.

ⁱⁱ 'Freedom', 'liberation' (*rang dbang*).

ⁱⁱⁱ See chapter 86 for the four introductory symbols (*rdzas bzhi*).

present awareness projects the five vases of light. These vases provide residence for the five tathagatas, and give the empowerment its name, 'the vase empowerment'.⁶⁴ Since the five tathagatas dwell in the essence of empty spaciousness, 'emptiness' indicates a point of attention, rather than any space-time quality.

3.1.2 The Empowerment of the Mudra of Sovereignty.⁶⁵ This entails recognition of how the five tathagatas reside in the matrix of the five vases. Whereas the essential identity of wisdom is expressed as the sublime forms of fivefold present awareness and the essential identity of gnostic compassion is evinced as their five consorts (mudras), all appearances of substance and attribute in the environment and the life within it, the chalice and the elixir, become the unborn mudra of the five tathagatasⁱ and the mudra of clarity of the tathagatas.ⁱⁱ With the intuition that this has always been so, no substance or attribute is identified, and everything is seen as the empty purity of sublime form and present awareness. Thus, specific, seemingly concrete identities are outshone by the light of the now.

3.1.3 The Empowerment of the Seven Precious Royal Emblems. This is the empowerment of seven exquisite jewels:ⁱⁱⁱ

As with the king who had a kingdom and seven gems,^{iv} essence is nowhere to be found and, yet, some immanent quality is always manifesting. This gem is the perfection of giving. Its metaphor is 'the wish-fulfilling gem'.

ii Since immaculate awareness of presence is the imperceptible ground, the source of all, both samsara and nirvana, are included in its emergent qualities. Free of all afflictive emotion, it has high moral sensitivity. Its metaphor is 'the precious queen'.

iii The peerless sublime forms of pure presence, although held to be fivefold, are in reality nondual, and through that realization seemingly

ⁱ The five tathagatas (*de bzbin gshegs pa lnga*) are the five sublime forms.

ⁱⁱ The mudra of clarity or light is mahamudra, which is the all-encompassing mudra that is spaciousness (dharmadhatu) represented anthropomorphically as Samantabhadra's mudra, Samantabhadri.

ⁱⁱⁱ The seven emblems are the thousand-spoked wheel, the wish fulfilling gem, the queen, the minister (or judge), an elephant, a horse and the general.

^{iv} The seven gems are ruby, sapphire, lapis lazuli, emerald, diamond, pearl and coral (with occasional variations).

objective attributes are reflexively outshone. Afflictive emotion is then absent and it is endowed with the perfection of patience. Its metaphor is 'the precious general'.

iv Intrinsic awareness of presence is free of all motivation and deliberate striving, so it is naturally replete with many buddha qualities. Arising together with gnostic compassion, the key to perfect recall⁶⁶ is attained, and that is accompanied by perseverance. Its metaphor is 'the precious supreme stallion'.

v Intrinsic awareness of presence cannot abandon its own essence, remaining unmodified, uncontrived, in real space, and so it abides in meditative absorption. Its metaphor is 'the precious elephant'.

vi Pure presence, dharmakaya, shows its own essence as non-conceptual impartial wisdom, incessantly exercising its discriminating wisdom-creativity, and so it is endowed with the perfection of wisdom. Its metaphor is 'the precious wheel'.

vii Intrinsic awareness of presence is infinitely flexible, appropriate skillful means, incessant vigor, and everyone's hope and aspiration, thus showing the qualities of present awareness. Endowed with such qualities its metaphor is 'the precious minister'.

3.1.4 The Word Empowerment:ⁱ When the word empowerment is bestowed, realization⁶⁷ occurs in the mindstream; this final holistic vision ensures emergence of infallible immanent qualities.

Through this realization, discursive elaboration is inhibited and through the four experiences that interrupt discursive elaborationⁱⁱ the veils of the mindstream's threefold essenceⁱⁱⁱ are dissolved. Regarding the ultimate vision intrinsic to the primal ground, what appears as substance is understood as the eight conceptual elements,^{iv} so that

ⁱ *Tshig dbang*: see Chokgyur Lingpa 2001, Vol. 2, p.37.

ⁱⁱ *Spros pa chod pa'i chos bzhi* – equivalent, perhaps, to the *cog bzhag mam bzhi*.

ⁱⁱⁱ The threefold tantric essence is empty essence, clear nature, and compassionate expression where tantra is 'continuity', 'flow', and, also, possibly, 'transmission'.

^{iv} The eight conceptual elements are birth, cessation, permanence, impermanence, coming, going, oneness and multiplicity (see GNT).

belief in common external substances is pre-empted and gnostic compassion irradiates all wandering minds.

Best Beloved, realizing the nature of presence in this way and knowing its creativity as never reified or crystalizing, empowerment is attained in the perfection of the now.

3.2 Vajrapani! You may rely on ordinary ritual substances to attain empowerment in the Precious Word Empowerment. Externally, long life empowerment is conferred based on substances. Internally, it is taught that the dimension of karmically conditioned proclivities is the perfect ground of trikaya.

Best Beloved, the empowerment has three parts: The Vase of Present Awareness;⁶⁸ The Mudra of the Royal Emblems; and Creative Presence.

3.2.1 Receiving the Precious Word Empowerment externally, five material vases are employed, while internally sambhogakaya is spontaneously perfected, complete with fivefold sublime vision.

3.2.2 Receiving the empowerment of The Mudra of Royal Emblems, externally, the six hand-held tokens (mudras) are employed, while internally, the six fields of consciousnessⁱ emerge as magical emanation, and, at the moment of completion, the nirmanakaya tulku emanates.

3.2.3 Receiving the Empowerment of Creative Presence, the four external symbols of empowerment⁶⁹ upon which the ritual depends are understood internally as the natural perfection of dharmakaya, the jeweline hollow.

This literary explanation should be given together with precious oral instruction.

I, Vajradhara, taught this order of empowerment in *The Child of Supreme Awareness*.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ The three mental fields of consciousness are here taken as one.

ⁱⁱ *Ye shes bla ma'i bu*: see Appendix 3.

The sixty-second chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel provides instruction upon the necessary components of tantra and it also teaches a summary of empowerment.

63. Empowerment: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please tell us the meaning of ‘empowerment’.

The Teacher said: Vajrapani, listen well! We are going to explain to you the essence, the semantic meaning, the types and the illustrative metaphor of ‘empowerment’.

The essence of empowerment is self-sprung present awareness in constant and total freedom from extraneous control.

The semantic definition of empowerment is a capacity to govern and consecrate all experience of samsara and nirvana.

These are the types: common and special empowerment, as elucidated in the previous chapter.

The metaphor for empowerment is the consecration of a king and his ascent to the throne.

The sixty-third chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel provides a clear, pithy explanation of the meaning of empowerment.

64. Samaya Commitment

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please elucidate your secret commitment.

The Teacher replied: Best Beloved, listen well! Commitment derives from empowerment. Regarding the paramount empowerment that needs no conferment, it entails four commitments that need no safeguard, no protection. Inviolable, maintained in the now

involuntarily with full confidence, our secret commitment is awareness of presence in the now.

This samaya commitment can be neither violated nor sustained because it is not conceivable in the dualistic terms of a vow to be kept and an adept to keep it.

The first of the four samaya commitments is called ‘absence’ because the imposed, contrived commitments of the eight lower approaches are no longer observed. Freed of all lower commitments, buddha body, speech and mind are infinitely spacious, and therefore the second samaya commitment is termed ‘openness’. Since no way exists to keep this unsustainable commitment except by spontaneous self-sprung awareness, the third samaya commitment is termed ‘unity’ or ‘oneness’. And since awareness of presence is maintained without any directed effort, the fourth samaya is termed ‘spontaneity’.¹

The sixty-fourth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches samaya commitment.

65. Samaya Commitment: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! What is the meaning of ‘commitment’?

The Teacher said: Vajrapani, listen well! We are going to teach you the essence, the semantic definition, the types and metaphors of ‘ultimate commitment’.

First, as to its essence, its essence is inviolable – it cannot be transgressed. It looks like awareness of presence. Maintenance of that commitment is the automatic function of reality. We can never go beyond it; it can never be broken. It is commitment to ultimate authenticity. A connotation of commitment is total absence of concession.

¹ Longchenpa’s *Treasury of Natural Perfection* (*Gnas lugs mdzod*) is devoted to this topic. See Keith Dowman 2010.

These are the two types of commitment: commitment that involves the curtailing of behavior and keeping vows, and commitment that needs no observation or oversight. The latter is the higher.

This highest, ineluctable, commitment is illustrated by the metaphor of space, because just as the boundaries of space cannot be transgressed, so commitment to the reality of intrinsic presence cannot be infringed.

The sixty-fifth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the meaning of commitment.

66. Mandala

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please speak about 'mandala' and 'selfless activity'.

The Teacher responded: Vajrapani, listen well! First, let me give you the essence, semantic definition, types and metaphors of 'mandala'.

These are the three types of mandala: the symbolic mandala; the mandala of the samadhi of the samaya-sattva;¹ and the naturally accomplished mandala.

We define those three separately: Symbolic mandalas are those painted or modeled in three spatial dimensions; meditational mandalas are those mentally visualized in meditation upon the samaya-sattva buddha-deity. The naturally accomplished mandala is the sublime vision of trikaya.

The essential definition of mandala,² a semantic description in terms of dharmakaya, is 'pure presence at the center, surrounded by a retinue of present awareness'. A semantic description in terms of the sambhogakaya dimension of enjoyment is 'the principal at the center surrounded by a circle of samaya-sattva *yab-yum* couples'. A semantic

¹ This is the buddha-deity or archetype visualized symbolically in creative meditation that becomes a constant companion (samaya).

² Mandala (Sanskrit) is etymologically 'a circle' and *dkyil 'khor* (Tibetan) is 'center-circle'.

description in terms of the dimension of magical nirmanakaya emanation is 'the universal self-existent ground at the center surrounded by the eight fields of consciousness'.

The descriptive simile for mandala is 'like the arising of the sun, the moon and the stars'.

Much more can be said on this topic; the foregoing is a summary.

The sixty-sixth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches mandala.

67. Selfless Activity

Then the Teacher spoke again: Master of the Secret, listen carefully! In the mandala of intrinsic clear light, which is a mandala that cannot be drawn or represented in any way, cannot be visualized nor meditated upon, selfless activity, which is beyond directed endeavor, is enacted without obstruction.

In the mandala of trikaya, the buddha-teacher demonstrates the reality of trikaya. By the effulgence of his sublime form and speech, the buddha-teacher spontaneously accomplishes the work of trikaya. Verbally expressing the essence of blessing, he performs unhindered selfless activity for the benefit of beings, spontaneously, without deliberation.¹

Then The Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara, please tell us the meaning of 'selfless activity'.

The Teacher replied: Vajrapani, listen well! 'Selfless activity' is essentially all-accomplishing awareness. As for its semantic meaning, it is 'selfless activity' because it is multifarious appropriate enactment beyond all directed effort.

These are the two types of activity: activity with endeavor and activity without endeavor.

¹ Here is an explanation of the dynamic aspect of gnostic compassion.

These are the four kinds of selfless activity without endeavor: First, through realization of dharmakaya, unstructured and unfabricated, the tendency to conceptual elaboration is mollified and that is called 'pacifying' activity. Second, the natural production of precious gem-like qualities is called 'enriching' activity. Third, through the mastery afforded by empowerment, everything that happens occurs in dharmakaya, everything that exists abides in it, everything that disappears dissolves into it, and that is called 'dominating' or 'controlling' activity. Fourth, unreified presence never extruding, arising impartially everywhere, always without obstacle, when through gnostic compassion it arises intensely, it is called 'destructive' activity.

Acting involuntarily, like sunlight dispelling the darkness of night over the three worlds, spontaneous comprehensive gnostic compassion accomplishes effortless, undirected, selfless activity without obstruction.

The sixty-seventh chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the meaning of effortlessness, which is the nature of selfless activity.

68. Puja and Yoga

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please define offering and worship (puja),ⁱ and union (yoga).

The Teacher replied: Vajrapani, know this! In the palace of empty reality, awareness of presence being a constant, present awareness of the now happens in the spaciousness of reality. Spaciousness and present awareness are nondual and nondual awareness is offering and worship.

The plenum of Vajradhara replete with every attribute is elaborated by the forty-two consorts, *yab* and *yum*,ⁱⁱ who play in the real space of the five sublime forms of present awareness. That uncrystalizing nondual awareness is ceaseless offering and worship.

ⁱ In practice, worship and offering are synonymous; both are possible translations of puja (Sanskrit and Hindi) and *mchod pa* (Tibetan).

ⁱⁱ The 42 sambhogakaya attributes.

The five kinds of offering – sights, sounds, aromas, flavors and textures – all apparitional emanation, awaken the five bodhisattva children,ⁱ and vanish without trace into the real space of ‘the knower’. Like foam on the waves of an ocean, arising and falling, offering is incessant.

Then Vajradhara spoke about yoga: Devotion to trikaya, neither united with nor separated from, is yoga. This supreme yoga is realized without meditation. Foregoing any striving towards the goal of realization, relaxing into the real space of ubiquitous effulgence, this is a yoga that transcends by far the yoga of the Great God Maheshvara. Simple relaxation is the unsurpassable yoga.

The essence of real yoga is nondual vision. The literal meaning of yoga is ‘union’ or ‘recognition of nonduality’, because the nonduality of the corporeal body and the intellect are recognized in the now, and because trikaya’s three existential dimensions – now perceived as indivisible – are forever unitary.

These are the two types of yoga: nominal-conceptual and existential, and it is the latter that we have explained above.

The sixty-eighth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches puja and yoga.

69. Mantra and Mudra

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan, please elucidate mantra and mudra.

The Teacher responded: Vajrapani, listen to me! First, let me tell you about mantra. The meaning of mantra, most sublime, is indicated by its essence, semantic definition and types.

These are the three types of mantra: secret mantra, magical knowledge mantra and dharani.ⁱⁱ The essence of secret mantra is wisdom and

ⁱ The ‘five bodhisattva children’ are the fields of sensory consciousness: see Appendix 1.

ⁱⁱ The first type of mantra is for enlightenment; the second type for magical transformation; and the third type to induce total recall.

compassion. The essence of knowledge-mantra is wisdom and present awareness. The essence of dharani is wisdom and samadhi.

As for the semantic definition of the three kinds of mantras, they are so-called because they protect the mind. The function of those mantras is elimination of fundamentally inherent habit patterns, elimination of ignorance and misunderstanding and elimination of adventitious conditioning.

Then the Teacher spoke about mudra: The essence of mahamudra is intrinsic changelessness. The semantic definition of mahamudra is 'inalienable mudra'. Regarding their types, mudras are described as either 'open' or 'closed'.⁷⁰ The four mudras enumerated below are 'closed':ⁱ

'Mahamudra' is defined as the unstructured, ineffable dharmakaya.

Pure presence being intrinsic to awareness of spaciousness, since spaciousness 'holds' the presence in itself, spaciousness and awareness are nondual and this nonduality is called samaya-mudra, 'the mudra that is inviolable commitment'.

Self-sprung awareness being uncrystalizing and nonspecific, its clarity is the dharma-mudra, 'the mudra of reality.'

The two existential dimensionsⁱⁱ of compassionate form, never crystalizing, displaying unmotivated gnostic compassion, are karma-mudra, 'the action-mudra'.

As for the similes, mudra is likened to space and to a royal seal, because neither can be transgressed, violated, exceeded or alienated.

There is no secret mantra – only unimpeded wisdom.
There is no mudra – only uninhibited gnostic compassion.

The sixty-ninth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches mantra and mudra.

ⁱ 'Mudra' can also be understood as 'yum-consort'.

ⁱⁱ The two form dimensions are sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya.

70. Approach and Accomplishment

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Please speak about approach and accomplishment.

The Teacher responded: Vajrapani, know this! The view, intrinsic presence of present awareness, is established experientially through the four direct introductions, the four ways of pointing out,ⁱ by which intrinsic presence may be experienced in reality. That is what is meant by 'approach'. Familiarity with what is pointed out is the meaning of the term 'close approach'. With release of what is pointed out, 'accomplishment' is attained. As for the ultimate fruition of that, it is 'great accomplishment'.ⁱⁱ

In nonrecitation of secret mantra,
We abide in reality;
In nonvisualization of mudra,
Spontaneously and perfectly
The mandala is accomplished.

The seventieth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches approach and accomplishment.

71. Agama Instruction: The Five Principles

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Teacher, Vajradhara! Please tell us in what lies the efficacy of your great agama instruction.

The Teacher replied: Vajrapani, listen to me! The efficacy of the agama instruction resides in these five principles:

1) The principle of trust in the instruction: Trust is generated by the tradition's unadulterated continuity.

ⁱ Approach, close approach and accomplishment relate to Garab Dorje's three incisive precepts: realization, conviction and confidence.

ⁱⁱ See 'the four degrees' in the GNT.

(2) The principle of unchanging sky-transmission: The transmission of the buddha-teacher's immaculate dharmakaya is causeless in the beginning, unconditioned in the middle and unchanging at the end.

(3) The principle of credible transmission: Moral faults eradicated, falsehood can never be spoken; since there is no cause, whatever is spoken is always true; the buddha-teacher being the quintessence of wisdom, the syllables and words meaningfully arranged, he can never leave authenticity.

(4) The principle of uncorrupted transcription: The words spoken by the buddha-teacher to the authentic all-embracing retinue are faultlessly written down, as Garab Dorje wrote them, in a precious golden book in lapis lazuli ink, in a pure, natural flow, which is never corrupted.

(5) The principle of harmony: Just as the triad of creative and fulfillment phasesⁱ are neither united nor separated in sublime vision, just as leaf, flower and fruit are all congruous, so the tantras are all in harmony; their general pronouncement free of contradiction, their meanings subsuming each other.

The seventy-first chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the five great principles of lineal transmission.

72. Agama Instruction: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please explain the meaning of 'agama instruction'.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Teacher spoke: Vajrapani, fully absorb this. We shall explain to you the essence, the semantic meaning, the types and the metaphors of agama instruction.

ⁱ These books are the tantras themselves constituting the kama (*bka' ma*) canon, in contradistinction to terma (revealed text).

ⁱⁱ Dzogchen itself is the third.

ⁱⁱⁱ Agama, *lung*.

Best Beloved, the essence of agama instruction is best indicated by way of its categories, which are experiential and verbal. The essence of the experiential instruction is called 'the transmission of unchanging mind', which is pure presence itself. The essence of the verbal instruction is faithful representation in the buddha-teacher's words without any addition or omission.

The verbal instruction is of two kinds: the 'ear-hole transmission', or orally transmitted lineage, and direct revelation. The latter is again of two kinds: provisional revelation and definitive revelation.

As for the semantic definition, it is 'agama instruction because the literal meaning of the text is indicated. It is 'scripture' because it is trustworthy. It is 'authority' because it is well established. It is 'transmission' because it is easily comprehended. It is 'a handle' because it is easy to grasp. It is 'tradition' because it is accessible to all.

Its similes are 'like a royal proclamation', 'like a vessel held by a handle', or again 'like a vessel with a handle that facilitates conveyance', or 'like an earthen vessel'.⁷¹

The seventy-second chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the meaning of agama instruction.

73. Secret Precept

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara, what constitutes a secret precept?

The Teacher responded: Vajrapani, fully absorb this! We are going to explain to you the necessary components of secret precept by means of five aspects of an overview: history, source, literal meaning, yoga and purpose.

The historical aspect has three parts:

The precepts are considered trustworthy because they represent the oral teaching of the timeless buddha in the now; they are not an individual's personal opinion.

They are also considered trustworthy because they represent buddha utterance of definitive meaning, without any allusive hidden intent, transmitted by symbolic means to the retinue of knowledge-bearers,¹ which is the retinue that comprehends definitive meaning.

Finally, they are considered definitely trustworthy because they were transmitted orally down the course of time, from mouth to ear, down through an unbroken lineage of historical individuals.

The source of secret precept is explained as uncaused awareness of presence.

Understand the verbal meaning of a precept as the essence of buddha-blessing expressed as words. It is transmission of trikaya communicated by buddha. In that way it is definitive meaning communicated by expressive words as explained above.

Yoga (union) is explained differently in the different approaches, as indicated in this great tantra *The Circle of Total Illumination*.

The intent of secret precepts is to revert the three degrees of delusion – superior, middling and ulterior – and by so doing to recognize the perfect, final holistic vision in the jeweline hollow.

The seventy-third chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the five necessary conditions for secret precept.

74. Secret Precept: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Teacher Vajradhara! How were the three types of precept composed?

The Teacher said: Vajrapani, listen to me! The three tantras, three treasures, of buddha body, speech and mind – are the source of all precepts, the precepts that show the fundamental nature of being, expressed best in the three in one formula.

¹ *Rigdzin*. vidhyadhara.

The three kinds of precepts that unite words and meaning are derived from the treasury of buddha body, speech and mind, known as the three essences.

The Master of the Secret spoke again: Please tell us the essence of 'precept', its literal meaning, its types and metaphors.

These are the two kinds of precept: verbal and intuitive. Intuitive precepts are secrets emanating from deep within, residing in the buddha-teacher's vajra heart, clearly manifest yet unarticulated.

Verbal precepts are defined as constellations of spoken words, faultlessly composed to express clear meaning, listed in a glossary to facilitate understanding, illuminating the semantic meaning.

The essence of both types is thus definitively indicated.

The semantic meaning of 'precept' is 'simple instruction with high significance'. The reasoned literal meaning of 'secret precept' implies an ineffable secret. It is like a mother's advice to her child.

As for similes, in general, the triad of tantra, agama and precept is 'like a king, minister and subjects'.

The seventy-fourth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the meaning of secret precept.

75. Stages, Paths and Perfections

Then the Master of the Most Secret made this request: Please elucidate the stages, paths and perfections according to secret precept practice.

The Teacher responded: Vajrapani, listen to me! According to the secret precepts of The Great Perfection, no stage is to be attained, no path is to be traversed, and none of the ten perfections are to be practiced.¹ However, the stages that are not purified, the paths that are not traversed and the perfections that cannot be practiced are

¹ See chapter 52 for the ten perfections.

elucidated here in conformity with the graduated approaches as already described.

Then the Lord of the Secret said: Please describe in order the stages that are not to be purified.

And the Teacher replied: On the one stage that is the reality of the Great Perfection, fifteen ways in which quality is complete and perfect may be counted:

When all the esoteric meanings of the general tantric tradition have been disclosed, and through the four direct introductions the nature of mind is perceived in this very lifetime, that is 'the stage of rejoicing', the first stage.

When secret precept has dissolved all doubt in the mind, and ultimate cognition is arising in the mindstream, that is called 'the stage of immaculate purity', the second stage.

When the mind is integrated with present awareness through empowerment, light emanates, so the third stage is called 'The Radiant.'

When the ineffable zing of reality is understood as creativity and is no longer dependent upon verbal expression, the fourth stage is widely understood as 'The Brilliant'.

On the fifth stage, the five poisons and the three poisons are immaculate in real space.

On the sixth stage, the three hollows¹ are recognized as trikaya's three dimensions.

On the seventh stage, the meanings of the eight lesser approaches are surpassed.

On the eighth stage, unwavering intuition of the reality of intrinsic presence occurs.

On the ninth stage all qualities are known as perfect in themselves.

¹ The three hollows are the jeweline hollow, the hollow of light, and the hollow of karmic propensity: see chapter 81.

On the tenth stage, intuitive wisdom suffuses all experience whatsoever, which is how realization⁷² arises in the hollow of karmic conditioning. When delusive perception of the objective aspect of realization ceases, the nature of all phenomenal experience shines in the matrix as the light of present awareness.

Abiding on the eleventh, which is called 'Universal Light', self-envisioned cognition arises from within.

By the generative power of wisdom, sublime form radiates from the mandala's center to the circumference, and in the fivefold mandala groupsⁱ the six kinds of dharma-eye arise.ⁱⁱ 'Nonabiding clarity' describes the 'The Lotus Stage', the twelfth stage.

The essence of speech, which is the six self-sprung seminal syllables,ⁱⁱⁱ emanating from the tongue as light, becomes magical nirmanakaya emanation. This is the thirteenth stage called 'The Great Assembly: The Circle of Seminal Syllables'.^{iv}

Identified with the Seed of Seminal Syllables, embodying ultimate purpose to all nirmanakaya beings, Vajradhara resides on the fourteenth stage.

In the hollow of present awareness, complete and perfect buddha manifesting as gnostic compassion unites and liberates each moment as it arises in its own ground. This is called 'the secret meaning of union and deliverance'.^v

On the fifteenth stage, as revealed in the five self-sprung verses^{vi} the peace of nirvana that lies beyond suffering is recognized. In the jeweline hollow, trikaya spirals into the matrix.

The new moon, the moon on the last day of the lunar month, is whole and entire, but due to the sun's dominance, it is invisible. From the

ⁱ See 'fivefold mandala group' (*tshom bu lnga*) in GNT.

ⁱⁱ See 'six eyes' in chapter 93 and GNT.

ⁱⁱⁱ Á A HA SHA SA MA – *rang byung yi ge drug*; see chapter 88.

^{iv} The Great Assembly (*yi ge 'khor lo tshogs chen*, (pronounced 'Yigay khorlo tsokchen').

^v Tanagana (*gsang ba'i don kyi shyor grol*), union and deliverance, is the union of subject and object (*yab-yum*) and simultaneous release. See also chapter 52.

^{vi} For the *rang 'byung tshig lnga*, see chapter 91, Nirvana: the Five Verses.

first day of the month until the fifteenth, the moon waxes; thereafter, it wanes. Likewise, while under the power of delusion, although neither in union nor separation the jeweline hollow does not manifest. From the first stage to the fifteenth it increases to its full extent, then it wanes until not a trace remains. Compared to the 'twenty-one' and the 'thirty-five' the fifteen is a fraction.⁷³ Reckoning from below, the cutting through is direct perception; looking from above, the view is uncrystalizing transparency, where in the absence of discursive thought lies wisdom.

The seventy-fifth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the obligations that accompany the stages, perfections and the five paths, and the actual order of the stages.

76. Stages: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Vajradhara! Please explain the meaning of 'stage'.

The Teacher responded: Listen, Vajrapani! We shall give you the essence, literal meaning, types and illustrative metaphor of 'stage'.

Best Beloved, the ultimate essence of 'stage' is unchanging spacious reality. The essence of both high and low stages, no matter what the degree, is wisdom and compassion.

These are the two types of stage: mundane and supramundane stages. The two types of the supramundane stage are those of the vast approach of Mahayana, and those of the lower approach of Hinayana. Within stages of the vast approach, of the general and special ones, the special ones have been taught in the previous chapter.

The literal meaning of stage is 'ground', or 'earth' (*sa*), because it is seemingly unchanging and stable.

As unadulterated perfection, the stages are 'like a stupa' or 'like a high throne'.

The seventy-sixth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the stages.

77. The Five Paths: Ultimate Fruition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! What is the graduated path that is not to be entered upon or traversed?

The Teacher responded: Vajrapani, listen well! Whoever tries to enter a path where actually no path exists will be sick at heart. Whoever strives to arrive at a destination where actually no destination exists is like a deer chasing a mirage. Indeed, no well-defined, definitive path exists.

The one great path demands faultless dedication to the untraveled, pathless path of sublime vision without uniting with it or separating from it. That pathless path is the reality of pure luminous mind that is unattainable by seeking. Any effort to reach it leads us further away from present awareness.

No entry into a path that is the intrinsic reality of present awareness in the here-and-now can be found. By seeking to traverse such a path, you fall into dire suffering. However, because it cannot be understood without explanation, as a way to realize the sole untraveled path we shall explain it in terms of the ulterior meaning of the five paths of the Mahayana.

Sitting in front of the Lama, with perfect reverence for the Guru,ⁱ is called the 'path of accumulation'. Assimilating into our mindstream the oral and textual advice given by the fearlessly authentic master is what we call the 'path of integration'. When, in this very life, through the four direct introductions – the pointing out instructions – definitive truth is glimpsed, it is to be understood as the 'path of seeing'. Abiding without union or separation in the states of both unmeditated meditation and nonmeditation is what we teach as the 'path of meditation'. Attaining the four aspects of the impersonal confidenceⁱⁱ of vision without grasping is the 'path of completion'.

ⁱ Here, 'Lama' is to be understood as a specific illusory embodiment and 'Guru' as the unformed totality.

ⁱⁱ Such confidence is marked by an absence of fear of a worse rebirth; absence of hope for a better rebirth; absence of hope for buddhahood; and equanimity in that hopelessness.

The seventy-seventh chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the five paths of definite fruition.

78. Path: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan, in neither union nor separation! Please teach us the meaning of 'path'.

The Teacher responded: Master of the Secret, listen well! We are going to give you the essence, semantic meaning, types and illustrative metaphor of 'path'.

The essence of 'path', as taught by me, is 'union', which is 'yoga', in neither union nor separation.

It is called 'path', although entering upon it, it takes us nowhere, and although it is inalienable.

These are the two types of path: the path serving as a cause and the path of definitive result. The former is illustrated by the metaphor of a topographical path, while a simile for the latter, effortless, path is 'like the flight path of a Garuda gliding¹ across the sky'.

The seventy-eighth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches a short explanation of the meaning of 'path'.

79. The Ten Perfections: Not to Be Practiced

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan, Beyond Striving and Endeavor! Please elucidate the ten perfections that are the product of unpracticed spontaneity but which have the same names as in the lower approaches where they are taught provisionally with ulterior meaning.

The Teacher responded: Vajrapani, listen carefully!

¹ 'Gliding' may be rendered also as 'hovering', 'soaring', 'floating (*lding bu*).

Free from the neurosis of compulsive striving,
 Spontaneity is always immanent;
 With buddha at the core of the now,
 Goal-oriented thought is quieted;
 Meditation veils the sublime –
 Buddha unveiled, everything is light.
 In the absence of unconditional spontaneity
 No definitive perfection is possible.ⁱ

Look at this authentic inclusive, definitive, reality!
 Out of the skylike essence
 Boundless visionary qualities radiate,
 Manifest but immaculate in nature,
 And that itself is the very perfection of giving;
 Dependent upon an absence of nescience,
 Its immaculate purity is the perfection of morality;
 Letting go of disciplined conduct,
 Perfectly appropriate skillful means⁷⁴
 Arises in reflexive responsiveness;
 And because every quality is naturally perfected,
 Aspiration is involuntarily accomplished;
 Present awareness is fundamentally inherent,
 So it is naturally present in the now.ⁱⁱ

The seventy-ninth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals that in the perfect ground the ten perfections are not to be practiced.

80. Perfection as Fruition: Definition

KRA GWADAD IRBA

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please explain the meaning of perfection in ‘the ten perfections’.

ⁱ See *Rig pa'i khu byug*, Appendix 3.

ⁱⁱ The perfections of giving, morality, selfless activity, skillful means, aspiration and present awareness are mentioned here. For the entire ten perfections, see chapter 52.

The Teacher said: Vajrapani, listen to me! We are going to explain to you briefly but clearly the essence, literal meaning, types and illustrative metaphors of 'perfection'.

First, the essence of perfection resides definitively in the ten perfections. Its literal meaning is 'gone beyond'; it is the 'perfection' at the extreme of nonabiding.

It has two categories: goal-oriented perfection and perfection as fruition.

As for the similes of perfection, it is like having set out on a journey for a definite purpose and finally arriving at the intended destination; or it is like a lifeboat that saves us from stormy seas; or like a man's finger loosing an arrow. It is arrival at final holistic vision.

The eightieth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the meaning of perfection as fruition.

81. The Three Hollows: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! What is that so-called 'hollow' mentioned by the Teacher in his tantras and agamas?

The Teacher announced: Listen, Vajrapani! We are going to define the essence of 'hollow', its semantic definition, its types and two illustrative metaphors.

These are the three types of hollow: the jeweline hollow, the hollow of light and the hollow of karmic propensities.ⁱ

The first is described as the matrix of present awareness, immaculate, transparent, unconceived and unchanging, all-illuminated, without obstruction. In a certain respect, it is like a crystal, like all-inclusive envisionment, indicated in detail above; the jeweline hollow is dharmakaya.

ⁱ See chapter 8.

As for the description of the second, it is unimpeded present awareness as the dimension of light. Endowed with the thirty-six marks of sambhogakaya, it is the five mandala-circles of spontaneity, abundantly brilliant and resplendent. That is the hollow of light, the dimension of enjoyment.

The third is described in the following way: With the four modes of birthⁱ fully evolved, the hollow of karmic propensities is composed of the body-mind aggregates, sense fields and sense faculties, as well as the eight fields of consciousness.

Thus, the three hollows are in essence the three existential dimensions – ‘buddha-bodies’ – indicated above. The general substantive ‘hollow’ denotes ‘container’ or ‘receptacle’.

Here is a semantic description of each of the three in turn: The jeweline hollow is endowed with only pure potential.

The hollow of light is perception without any intrinsic nature, indicated by the similes ‘like the reflection of the moon in water’, ‘a mirror-image’ and ‘a rainbow’.

The hollow of karmic propensities is described by conceptual analysis and by comparison.

The eighty-first chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel defines the three hollows.

82. Appearances: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please elucidate the different meanings of ‘appearance’ⁱⁱ as employed in the tantras and agamas.

ⁱ The four modes of birth are moisture birth, egg birth, womb birth, miraculous birth.

ⁱⁱ ‘Appearance’, ‘perception’ and ‘vision’ are three ways of translating the Tibetan *snang ba*, three degrees of subjectification of the sensory field. See Glossary of English Dzogchen Technical Terms.

The Teacher responded: Listen, Vajrapani! We are going to tell you the definition, semantic description, types and metaphors of the word 'appearance'.

First, the two types of appearance are here described at length and in brief.

Four types of appearance are described at length: First, the six types of perception conditioned by the six kinds of wandering mind; secondly, the ten kinds of visions of the world perceived by causal-minded, goal-oriented minds of the lower approaches; thirdly, the unitary vision of reality realized; and the indivisible, 'all-good' vision of Samantabhadra.

Three types of appearances are described in brief: Firstly, impure, deluded perception; secondly, pure, mundane perception; thirdly, perception in real, present awareness.¹

First, at length, deluded perception: Deluded perception consists of the six kinds of perception fixated by the six kinds of wandering mind; such perception appears as separate worlds, or realms, comprised of everything that arises contingently in the fluid mandala of knowable things.

Thus, hell-beings seem to experience either extreme heat or cold.

The three kinds of hungry ghosts (pretas) – external, internal and common – experience three different kinds of perception: The external type perceives food as pus and blood or takes it to be thorns. The common type perceives food as food, but the food is denied them by a protecting guard. To the third, the internal, type, food appears unguarded, but when it is ingested it seems to act as poison.

The two types of animal have different perceptions: the first type live in an inner world of darkness, while the second type, estranged animals, live in constant fear.⁷⁵

The common perception of human beings accords with 'Our country, our land, our people, our sweet home!'

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¹ These three degrees approximate the significance of 'snake', 'rope' and 'real perception' of the Mind Only School.

Demi-gods (titans) perceive armor and weapons, while gods perceive delicious elixirs.

The mental mode of perception in all of the wandering minds is set and fixed by habitual tendencies, which are determined by karmic propensity.

Secondly, these are the ten different causally-minded ways of viewing the world: Nonbuddhists who see permanence everywhere perceive nothing but concrete, material things. To nonbuddhists with the nihilist view that we have only this one life – no future or past lives – events seem to occur randomly; they believe that when they die they dissolve into their component great elements; they see nothingness in appearances. Auditors (shravakas) perceive yak-tails, meadows and partless atoms, and dualistic phenomenal identity.¹ Hermits (pratyekabuddhas) similarly perceive only a partial emptiness – a lack of personal identity in the body-mind aggregates and sensory fields. ‘Sutrists’ perceive absolute reality as emptiness and conventional truth as enchanting illusion.

Adepts in both outer and inner tantrayana perceive absolute reality in conformity with the sutrists, and conventional appearances as distinct from the absolute. Kriya-tantra adepts perceive ‘the three families’ as lords to serve. Upa-tantra adepts perceive them as divine masters to attend. Yoga-tantra adepts see them as brothers or friends. Mahayoga adepts perceive the body-mind aggregates as buddha-deity manifestation. Anuyoga adepts perceive them as spaciousness and present awareness.

In none of these ten approaches has the notion of subjective causality been apprehended and rejected, and perception of appearance understood as delusive insofar as what is seen does not exist in reality. Such is perception of appearances to the causally-minded.

Thirdly, perception in which meaning – or reality – is realized, is that of the adept sensing spontaneous ‘great’ perfection.

Fourthly, perception of everything as dharmakaya-essence is the perception of Samantabhadra. Similar to the previous category, it is

¹ See chapter 36.

nondual vision. It has the function of spontaneous envisionment in the now.

Then the three kinds of appearances described in brief: Firstly, impure, delusive perceptions are those of the above-mentioned six varieties of wandering beings; secondly, pure mundane perceptions are those of bodhisattvas on the ten stages; and thirdly, the true perception of present awareness is the same as the above-mentioned 'all-inclusive self-envisionment'.

The essence of all perception of appearances can be gleaned from its classification. Just to give a partial explanation here, the true definitive essence of perception is the radiance of reality and pure vision. It is defined like that because perception is seen as unreified and fluid.

Some metaphors and similes were included in the enumeration of categories. Here we shall teach definitive similes of appearances perceived: Such perception is 'like sunlight' or 'like candle light'; shining, it consists only of its own radiance. In all-inclusive present awareness, 'appearance perceived' consists of transparent, self-envisioned lightform, the very radiance of present awareness, which reveals awareness of pure reality. It is like the appearance of a face in the mirror and so on, which has already been explained, and it is not to be repeated here.

In short, there are three fields of appearance: delusive, pure and real.

The eighty-second chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel provides a clear and concise explanation of appearances.

83. Physical Embodiment

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! How does the mental propensity to physical embodiment manifest?

The Teacher responded: Listen, Vajrapani! First, creative gnostic compassion manifests in the following way: From the fivefold nature of pure presence, the light of self-sprung awareness shines out. Then conceptualized as dualistic subject and object, that light becomes the

physical receptacle, 'the world'. In that way, creative gnostic compassion manifests in the minds of deluded sentient beings.

Then, gnostic compassion arises in the dimension of magical nirmanakaya manifestation in this way: The unitary presence of *yab-yum* sambhogakaya buddha radiates the light of the six seminal syllables.ⁱ

Then the four modes of becomingⁱⁱ are possibly entered upon: First, having identified the karmically determined body, the appropriate form of life is invested. Then, physical attributes develop. From the two eyes, two principal channels appear, and at knots or nubs in those channels, secondary channels branch off, and the remainder of the body is formed. Within the body, the *tsitta*,ⁱⁱⁱ the lungs and the other internal organs develop with their various functions. That is the way in which the composite body evolves.

This is how the elixir that nurtures physical strength is produced: The navels of mother and child connected, the elixir is generated behind the navel, increasing strength, sleep and solidity.

The eighty-third chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the four modes of birth.

84. The Four Bardos

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Teacher Vajradhara! Please explain the four bardos that are mentioned in the tantras and agamas.

The Teacher responded: Best Beloved, listen to me! The four bardos are the naturally pure bardo ('the bardo of life'), the bardo of samadhi, the bardo of the clear light of reality and the bardo of becoming.

'The bardo of life' (the 'naturally pure bardo') consists of the delusive appearances of the present life.

ⁱ Á A HA SHA SA MA.

ⁱⁱ See chapter 94 (*mu bzhi*).

ⁱⁱⁱ For *tsitta* see also chapter 42.

'The bardo of samadhi' is an escape from karmic activity into meditation.

'The bardo of reality' occurs when delusive perception ceases and for five days present awareness dawns as vision. It is a 'bardo', an 'intermediate state', and it consists of light.

'The bardo of becoming' occurs when the wisdom of realization fails to emerge within the clear light of reality, and for five days present awareness remaining merely latent, appearances are generated by previously determined karmic propensity. The bardo-being has all senses intact and unobstructed. The process of 'becoming' develops as in the past. With the divine eye, bardo-beings can see similar beings, because they are similarly engaged in searching for a new body and home.

Such is the essence of bardo, presented as its types.

Since in absolute terms the bardo does not exist,¹⁷⁶ instead of 'the natural condition' it is known as 'the transitional state'. That is called 'definitive reasoning'.

The simile illustrating experience in any one bardo is 'like the mind-state of someone who has set out on a business trip, but failing to reach his destination remains caught in between'.

In the bardo of life, the lifeblood of all tantras and agamas is disclosed, firmly established by the four pointing out introductions and surely ascertained by the intuitive view of intrinsic presence. The bardo of samadhi illuminates whatever is not clear. In the bardo of reality, present awareness is recognized. If that does not happen then the karmic flow is perpetuated in the bardo of becoming.

The eighty-fourth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the bardo.

85. Mind and Awareness

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! How do we distinguish between mind and awareness? Surely, liberation in the bardo of reality depends upon that distinction.

¹ In general, the word 'bardo' is a collective noun embracing all its divisions.

The Teacher responded: Listen, Vajrapani! Relative mind and present awareness are at once the same and different; they are very difficult to distinguish. The relative mind is the creative expression of present awareness; present awareness is the ground of mind. As one, mind and present awareness are 'liberated'; separated, they are 'confined'.

In order to distinguish relative mind from present awareness, we make the distinctions between essence, location, path, media and quality.

Regarding essence: The essence of present awareness is immaculate, and so it is dharmakaya. Its composition is light, so it is dharma-kaya. Its manifestation is without inside and outside, so it is unimpeded transparent awareness. Trikaya's three existential dimensions (dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya) are neither united nor separated, so the veil of substantiality vanishes. We have already explained it in detail, so we shall not dwell upon it here. The relative mind is defined in essence as dualistic perception in an enveloping hollow.

Regarding location: The location of all-inclusive present awareness is the holistic light-seed of immaculate spaciousness; or, in other words, it is the jeweline matrix. Its modes of existence, abiding and appearance are treated above and below. The relative mind is located in the city of conflicted energy.

Regarding the path: Connected to the jeweline ocean, all-inclusive awareness moves everywhere, through the soft white channel,ⁱ which is the channel of emptiness, where the nuclei of blood do not run. That is the path of present awareness. The path of the relative mind is the throat; the movement of the breath therein is silent speech.

Regarding media: Present awareness and the relative mind are the two media. The invisible pervasive hidden medium of present awareness has two aspects – its clarity or transparency, and its physical medium, which is the eye. The media of the relative mind are the three media of desire.ⁱⁱ Consciousness is characterized by the movement or nonmovement of breath.

ⁱ This is the *kati* channel running from the heart (*tsitta*) to the eyes. Where the channels (*nadi*, *rtsa*) are mentioned, we are probably in the realm of late, upadesha, tantra.

ⁱⁱ The three media are physical, energetic and mental -- thought, word and deed.

Regarding quality: The immanent quality of present awareness manifests as sublime form. Qualities of the relative mind, all of which should be considered as negative conditioning, manifest as experience of samsara, which is to be considered as mind and mental events.

Best Beloved! Let me illustrate that truth with a profound symbolic story! Once upon a time, at the summit of Mount Meru, in the ocean of sunlight, there lived a naga king called 'Crystal Light'. Becoming sad, he looked down from above and noticed a precious house called 'Sun and Moon Adornment' standing in 'Immaculate Lotus Grove'. He descended to that grove and built a palace there and on its roof he built a shrine-room where he lived. Again becoming sad, he looked up and in a place called 'The City of Vital Energy' he saw someone called 'The Creator'. He went there, and as king he appointed The Creator his minister.

A conflict ensued between king and minister, and the minister, becoming restless took a powerful horse and rode everywhere in constant travel. Arriving at the three doors of combat, he found five precious things, which he then offered as tribute to the king. The king was indifferent. The exhaustion of the people and the minister was over. The king and the minister then fought each other, the king gained dominion over the minister and the people were subjected.¹ The king and minister separated, continuous peace was established, the king's palace was protected and since no conflict with rivals erupted, the king and his kingdom were happy.

JÑĀNA CHITTA PRĀBE SHAYA SĀDU ĀTRAKĀLADU

The eighty-fifth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the difference between relative mind and present awareness.

86. The Fourfold Symbolic Pointing Out

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please teach us the fourfold pointing out.

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¹ An absence of coherence is evident in this anecdote; if the king represents 'awareness', the minister 'the relative mind', and the people 'the senses', it begins to make sense. The horse is 'karmic energy:' see chapter 42, notation 3.1.

The Teacher replied: Vajrapani, fully absorb this! Just as we can know our facial features when they are reflected clearly in a pellucid mirror, so we can gain certainty about trikaya's nature, which also is neither in union nor separation, by means of two symbolic methods that focus upon the spontaneity of the now.

Master of the Secret! There are four different pointing out introductions. Why? Because certainty is to be found in four different fields. What are those four? Dharmakaya's jeweline hollow, the fivefold sambhogakaya, the nirmanakaya bardo of life, and trikaya complete in neither union nor separation. Certainty in these four fields, nondeceptive and true, leaves us free of all doubt. In that way, they perform the function of the four noble truths. Unreified and uncaused, present awareness is what is pointed at. That is why, Best Beloved, that is why there are exactly four symbolic introductions.

In the pointing out of present awareness, these are the two distinct approaches: (1) pointing it out as the primal ground of spontaneity , and (2) pointing it out as manifest realization.

(1) Master of the Secret, the order according to the instruction on the ground of spontaneity is this: First, pointing out as dharmakaya, secondly, pointing out as sambhogakaya, thirdly pointing out as nirmanakaya, and fourthly pointing out as trikaya in neither union nor separation.

There are two aspects to the method of introduction, symbolic and verbal.

There are four introductory metaphoric symbols: Vajrasattva's mirror,ⁱ a mirror image,ⁱⁱ an eyeballⁱⁱⁱ and the sun.

Four verbal introductions accompany the disclosure of the four introductory symbols. With the symbol of dharmakaya: 'Beloved Initiate, the mental mirror is not the actual dharmakaya, but understand the similitude. Just as this mirror has no outside or inside,

ⁱ Vajrasattva's mirror (*rdo rje sems dpa'i me long*), may be represented as either a highly polished concave bronze disc, or by a clear crystal.

ⁱⁱ The synonyms of 'mirror image' are 'likeness', and 'mask' (*'dra 'bag*).

ⁱⁱⁱ A closed dome of light (*'od khyim kha sbyar*) is the eyeball; it is synonymous with 'water lamp' (*rgyang zhags chu'i sgron ma*), one of the four lamps of togal, and also 'the visual field'.

know that dharmakaya also lacks outside and inside. Just as this mirror has neither back nor front, dharmakaya also has neither back nor front. Just as this mirror is seemingly transparent, so dharmakaya is stainless transparency; unimpeded clear light, it is pure and empty.⁷

‘Since trikaya has no inside or outside, the five colors shining uncaused, understand that it is within the transparent dharmakaya as intrinsic clarity, and that the buddha-teacher is essential present awareness. Just as the mirror seemingly projects the five colors within itself, so the two dimensions of form shine converted within dharmakaya.’

Best Beloved, this is to be said when sambhogakaya is introduced by its symbol: ‘Like the reflective face of a mirror in which images appear, the field of reality is also clear and radiant. Just as the image in the mirror has no intrinsic nature, so the five sublime forms appear in the matrix of reality without substance.’

Best Beloved, when nirmanakaya is symbolically revealed, this is what is said: ‘The ‘water-lamp’⁸ illuminates a field of empty spaciousness, which is like a clear and bright mirror. The evidence of present awareness shines forth as the light of nirmanakaya, like the five colors shining on the surface of a mirror.’

As the absence of both union and separation of trikaya’s three existential dimensions is established symbolically and verbally, Best Beloved, comprehend well what is said: ‘Just as the heart of the sun emits light, so the gnostic compassion of dharmakaya manifests as nirmanakaya. Just as sunlight cannot be separated from the sun, so trikaya is neither in union nor separation in the now.’

(2). Master of the Secret, listen well! According to manifest realization, the order of instruction is begun with the bardo: 1) Pointing out the dimension of emanation, nirmanakaya, is an introduction to the bardo of reality; 2) pointing out the dimension of perfect enjoyment, sambhogakaya, is an introduction to its fivefold empty purity; 3) the absence of any union with or separation from trikaya is an introduction to complete and empty purity; 4) pointing out ultimate inclusive perfection is an introduction to dharmakaya.

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⁷ The eye, the ‘far-reaching lasso of the water lamp (*rgyang zhangs chu'i sgron ma*)’, one of the four lamps of *togal*. See Keith Dowman 2014 p.46.

While repeating the same precept as in the instruction on the spontaneous ground, 1) first introduce the bardo. 2) With that realization, since sublime forms are visible, next introduce the five-colored light. 3) Then, since the exaltation of supra-sensory perception is complete, introduce ultimate inseparability. 4) Nirvana is the genuine source of gnostic compassion, so introduce the precept to ultimate, inclusive perfection.

The metaphors, the four introductory symbols listed above, evince pure luminous mind. Immutable evidence of the achievement of the four pointing out introductions is the threefold trikaya, which is neither united nor separated; those are the twelve aspects of this topic.

As to the four introductory symbols elaborated above, each has four visionary aspects, making a total of sixteen; four levels of sublime vision are associated with each of the four spontaneously present, definitive precepts, which give realization of the introductions. Such is a brief mention of sublime vision.¹

If their character is elucidated more extensively: Through introduction to the sole holistic seed of light, the in-dwelling existential dimension of dharmakaya is realized and the vision of the jeweline hollow is perceived. Through an introduction to mahayoga, the in-dwelling sambhogakaya dimension of enjoyment is realized and fivefold present awareness is perceived. Through introduction to the great perfection, the in-dwelling dimension of magical nirmanakaya emanation is realized and the vision of the bardo of reality is perceived. Through introduction to anuyoga, the inseparability of the three existential dimensions is realized and inclusive perfection is perceived.

When the four fields appear as pure presence after the four direct ritual introductions have been received, each time a mindful cognition occurs a final holistic vision is achieved. When mindful cognition awakens in the visual field, the samadhi of fourfold recollection² reigns.

¹ These four sublime visions (*dgongs pa bzhhi*) evidently do not relate to the four visions of togal (*snang ba bzhhi*).

² See GNT.

At that time, when complete awakening in the peace of nirvana dawns, the twenty aspects of pure luminous mind¹ are realized. Through such realization of supreme omniscient buddha,² the sublime vision of the four direct introductions⁷⁷ is attained. If the vision of the fourfold pointing out is not attained, an error in procedure is to be assumed, or that is how the Vajrasattvas explain it.

The eighty-sixth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel reveals the fourfold pointing out.

87. Release and Signs of Release

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! To repeat what you have already taught, please explain 'delusive appearances'? How do appearances as present awareness look and how does each perception appear? Please tell us the order in which the signs of release appear? What are the best and the lesser ways of release?⁷⁸

The Teacher responded: Master of the Secret, know this definitive insight! Delusive mundane appearances arise out of themselves in the first place and are released back into their own real space at the end.

As we have already taught, in accord with the highest teaching, self-arising, self-releasing, all appearance is mind-created and mind-controlled and no objective field exists out there to be apprehended. When the nature of mind is realized, present aware-ness dominates, and no mental agent of perception – no 'perceiver' – apprehends anything.

In pure presence, which is free of dualistic perception, the intrinsic radiance of present awareness shines out. Like a rainbow appearing vividly in the sky, the light of awareness glows in the matrix of reality. That light is all pervading without center or circumference.

¹ See GNT.

² This is Sarvavid-Vairochana (*Rnam pa kun rig sangs rgyas mchog*). He is also the adi-buddha of the *Sarva Durgati Parishodhana Tantra*, one of the early tantras describing the Vairochana mandala.

At that time, perception is assimilated by that light, and the five distilled essences of the great elements occur as the zero essence of phenomenal reality.ⁱ The five great elements that are the components of all appearance are thus purified in their own space, dissolving into themselves.

The sequence of signs of dissolution of the great elements is as follows: First, as earth dissolves into earth, the body becomes heavy and consciousness dims. Then, as water dissolves into water, the mouth and nose become dry. As air dissolves into air, the body and mind become heavy and sink. As fire dissolves into fire, the body loses its heat. Then as consciousness evaporates into space, no feelings remain, neither happiness nor suffering, and no thought at all, only undifferentiated space.

The fivefold nature of reality, identical to the five light-seeds, are neither the same as, nor different from, the pure nature of space. And since nothing exists apart from that space, our true identity is inseparable from colored spaciousness. 'Its appearance is its own essence' is the way to say it.

The sign of pristine awareness devolving into the ground is a sunset as seen from the summit of Mount Meru.ⁱⁱ The quieting of the four vital energiesⁱⁱⁱ is an indication of the expiry of karmic energy. An envoy is sent from the city of the demon of death to ascertain the ripeness of the occasion.

Thus, we have given secret precepts on the signs of death.

The eighty-seventh chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the general character of release and the common signs of release.

ⁱ According to this analysis, the elements do not dissolve one into the next, as frequently asserted by later authorities, but more precisely they devolve into their own identical essence (*chos nyid ngo bo nyid*).

ⁱⁱ The sun and moon circle the peak of Mount Meru.

ⁱⁱⁱ These are the four of the five vital energies that depend upon karmic energy.

88. Varieties of Release

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Completely Free Teacher! If the foregoing is a general commentary on release, please define in detail, and in order, the superior, the middling and the inferior ways of release.

The Teacher responded:

For those of the highest capacity,
In the all-inclusive transparency of the now,
Without bardo transition for even a moment,
The very present is acutely real.
The real clear essence lies
In the naturally pure and empty sky,
Not arising, just abiding,
As the transparency of pure presence.

For example,
A house built on the ground in empty space
Seemingly divides that space;
But the space inside the house
And the naturally pure exterior space
Are united by the open doorway –
The two spaces are not separate.
Presence inside the hollow of habits
And presence inherent in space
Are joined by the open door of awareness,
And the conditioned body unveiled,
The two exist in nondual transparency.

If we realize the meaning of this example,
Like a lion leaping high into the sky,
In spontaneous unimpeded awareness,
We leap into the jeweline hollow,
Avoiding all temporal experience of bardo.
That is spontaneous release into the hollow of the now.⁷⁹

No calculation at all is possible in this mode of nonrelease. People with an ordinary capacity, unable to comprehend such instruction, should not consider this mode of liberation. If it *is* entertained, for that very reason it is certain that it will not be realized, and that the encounter with reality will be delayed at least for another rebirth.

Ordinary people are of superior, middling or inferior capacity:¹

1. The superior individual is released in three moments: In the first moment, drawn into the process of perception, the five sensory consciousnesses are pure and empty, and internally the great elements are infused with light, so that all creative expression – visionary appearance – is gathered into the primal ground, bound in potential like a tightly bound ball of yarn.⁸⁰ The four vital energies gradually subside and oblivious karmic energy emerges from the life-root.⁸¹

The starting point becomes the path and the path simultaneously is the door of the reality-matrix. Surfing a continuum of the transparency of gnostic compassion, the intrinsic radiance of pre-sent awareness engulfs us. That is the first moment.

Then wisdom is born as the vision of sublime form, as the forty-twofold radiant vision of fivefold present awareness – which is being like an image in a mirror. Since that has been explained in detail,⁸² we shall not dwell upon it here.

Here, the extraordinary experiences of direct intuitionⁱⁱ arise;⁸³ trikaya is fully represented; and the lights of the six seminal syllablesⁱⁱⁱ shine out. Meaningful action is performed in the sublime nirmanakaya body. This moment defines the vision of *completion*. It is the second moment.

After that, nirvana is attained. Leaving the relative mind and experience of samsara behind, dissolution occurs into the real space that has no location, shining as unitary immutable present awareness. This moment defines the vision of *ultimate completion*. It is the third moment.

2. Ordinary people of average capacity are released in the following way: In the first moment, the delusion of separate outside and inside ceases. In the second moment, intrinsic radiance shines clearly. The third moment is an abiding in the point-instant of the now. In the

¹ Perhaps the experience is identical for all, and what changes is only the form of expression for these various types of individuals.

ⁱⁱ For the six direct intuitions see chapter 88 and GNT.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ā A HA SHA SA MA: *yi ge drug pa*.

fourth moment, self-envisioning wisdom is born, and the four endarkening demon-temptersⁱ are finally subdued.

In the fifth moment, with the forty-two immanent qualitiesⁱⁱ manifesting, the middling adept fully completes the fivefold vision. Endowed with the six direct intuitions and the six recollections,ⁱⁱⁱ like the sun arising in the vault of the sky present awareness dawns with full knowledge of specifics.⁸⁴ Light emanates from the six seminal syllables, Á and so forth, and these are the cause of magical nirmanakaya emanation.

Secreted during the intercourse of two karmically pure individuals,⁸⁵ the white and red seminal nuclei generate the body, and the six seminal syllables of pure luminous mind (bodhichitta) generate the relative mind within the stream of physical consciousness.⁸⁶ But it is in the matrix of the white and the red where pure presence lies, hidden in the constitution of body and mind. Thus the body is complete and perfect, and as magical emanation it serves wandering beings.

Like that, awareness of presence always exists in the now in all wandering beings without exception, and the core of our being is forever unchanging and unreified. With that certainty, the light of the buddha mind shining in all sentient beings, all and everything is constantly released in the now. The buddha-teacher's vision now matched in everyone, the elixir mixed with intellect becomes integrated elixir, so that the average individual fulfills his perfect vision.

In the sixth moment, buddha passes fully into nirvana. At its beginning, the breath of present awareness stirs dharmakaya into sublime form dimensions, and, at its end, the principal and retinue gradually fade. As the breath of present awareness stirs in the real space of reality, the great elements as concrete entities dissolve as they stand, the five great elements of nirmanakaya evaporating into the real space of five-colored light, and that five-colored light released in the essential element of present awareness.

ⁱ These are the maras of embodiment, pride, afflictive emotion and death (*ma rig bdud bzhi*).

ⁱⁱ For the forty-two immanent qualities see Appendix 1.

ⁱⁱⁱ See 'six direct intuitions' and 'six recollections' in GNT.

The five-colored light arising, it dissolves back into the matrix. At first, even as it arises, it arises within spaciousness; even as it abides, it abides in the space of reality; and even in the end as it fades, it vanishes into the authentic space of reality.⁸⁷ The three eyes also dissolve into the authentic space of reality, shining as an immutable singularity. The awareness of intrinsic presence abides in the space of reality; outer radiation inhibited, present awareness shines within like a butter-lamp shining inside a vase. At that time, the changeless trikaya regains primacy. That is how the middling-average individual fulfills the vision of ultimate completion.

3. Ordinary people of inferior capacity are released in the following way: The five external elements are reverted into the five lamps out of which they arose,ⁱ where they are deprived of their objectivity. The lamp that illuminates the five senses is overwhelmed by present awareness and freed from fixating and grasping thought. The five internal elements are gathered into the five creative modes of present awareness, which is the lamp of pure presence. Thus, all creativity is said to have been gathered into the primal ground.

At that juncture, the vast matrix in which sun and moon are united in the precious buddha mind, and nondiscriminating wisdom are blended into a single matrix. This is the natural condition of the karmically conditioned hollow, which becomes evident in the first moment.

At that time, the great elements reverting into the primal ground, these signs emerge one after the other. The signs are associated with the five vital energies, obdurate karmic energy and the others.ⁱⁱ Uplifting energy, residing in the joints, makes the body light and mobile, but when that energy subsides, the body cannot raise itself. It is associated with earth.

The energy that produces luster and luminosity pervades the body, and is called therefore 'all-pervasive energy'. It creates body oil, and the luster and the glow of the body, but since it is very subtle, the

ⁱ These five lamps (*sgron me lnga*) are the lamps of the five-colored light of awareness, not the togal lamps of the three skies. For external and internal elements see chapter 9.

ⁱⁱ The five vital energies: life-sustaining (*srog 'dzin*), upward moving (*gyen rgyu*), all-suffusing (*khyab byed*), thermal (*me myam*), and downward moving (*thur sel*). See Keith Dowman 2014 p.36.

slightest circumstance can diminish it, and the body suffering, the glow of a healthy complexion fades. It is associated with water and when it dies so does vitality.

The energy inherent in fire resides in the stomach. It digests food and heats the organism. As it subsides, digestive heat dissipates and food becomes indigestible. It is associated with fire.

The basic energy that separates distilled essence from sediment pervades both the upper and the lower doors.ⁱ It is the 'vital energy of air'.⁸⁸ This energy separates nutriment from its dregs and drives the refuse either up to the upper door or down to the lower door, and white and red seed-essence,ⁱⁱ urine, etc. are discharged. When that energy subsides,⁸⁹ elimination fails, and consciousness and the body decline.

The ruthless energy of karma is a samsaric energy dwelling in the life-root and so long as it exists this life-bearing energy sustains the body and mind. It is associated with consciousness.

When the karmic energy stirs it flows from the fleshly heart (*tsitta*) along the channel that is like a silken thread and, arriving at the secret symbolic door,⁹⁰ it remains there as awareness of presence, which is like the light in between the eastern mountains over which the sun's rays are dawning and the western mountains that are illuminated, a field of vision shining in reality. Since present awareness is unimpeded transparency, it is bound to the continuity of gnostic compassion. Mounted upon the continuum of gnostic compassion, only intrinsic radiance exists.

We stay in the radiance of awareness for five days, everything arising at one in the now.⁹¹ The envisionment of present awareness shines like a rainbow appearing in the sky.

The wisdom of realization arises in successive visions:

ⁱ The upper door is the fontanel, the door of purity (*tshangs pa'i sgo*, brahmarandhra) the location of the crown chakra of great bliss, and the lower door is the perineum (*steng sgo 'og sgo gnyis*).

ⁱⁱ Semen and blood (*thig le dkar dmar*) are the seminal nuclei (bodhichitta).

On the first day,ⁱ nonfixated presence expresses itself as sky-blue light, and present awareness of spaciousness is recognized as self-envisioned, self-arising, intrinsically clear, intrinsically radiant, where nothing is to be seen and no one is there to see.

On the second day, on top of the light of awareness of spacious-ness, mirror-awareness arises. When its white light becomes visible in the field of appearances, in itself it is indeterminable presence and mirror-awareness.

On the third day, when yellow light appears in the field of appearances, in itself it is the radiance of the awareness of same-ness, self-envisionment as the inseparable union of presence and emptiness.

On the fourth day, when red light appears in the field of appearances, in itself it is the radiance of discriminating awareness, awareness discriminating the unreified envisionment of wisdom.

On the fifth day, when green light appears in the field of appearances, in itself it is the radiance of all-accomplishing aware-ness performing the self-envisionment of reality.

In that ordered process, each day a further vision of present awareness shines forth. With the direct process of letting go, a realized wisdom is engendered in each envisionment. With recognition of no-mind, awareness has no witness and there is no controller. On the fifth day, sublime form is perfected and wisdom is complete, and instantaneously the five mandala-circles in the mandala of the clear light of reality are expressed as a noncrystalizing mudra. With that fivefold finality, the sublime vision is perfect and complete.

Regarding those sublime forms, six direct intuitions arise along with the dharma-eye, which is 'the eye of reality'. How does that occur?

The first intuition is direct intuition of the dharma-eye, which directed upwards observes the imperceptible existential dimension of the precious dharmakaya. Looking straight ahead, it sees the forty-twofold mudra of the multifarious sambhogakaya dimension of perfect

ⁱ Whereas in the case of those of superior or middling capacity the experience of release was differentiated according to 'moments', here the division is according to 'days'. These 'days' appear to consist of abstracted visionary aspects of instantaneous rainbow-like experience.

enjoyment. Looking downwards, it illuminates the pure-lands of the magical nirmanakaya dimension just as they exist in the hollow of karmic propensities.

The second is direct intuition of the ear, which, directed upwards, hears timeless buddha mind of one-pointed soft-focused present awareness talking to itself. Directed straight ahead, it illuminates the five sambhogakaya circles. Directed downwards, it hears all that is spoken in the pure-lands of magical emanation.

The third is direct intuition of buddha mind. Focused upwards into the hollow of the precious dharmakaya, full awareness of nondiscriminating wisdom with its intrinsic nongrassing clarity, free of any thought of extrinsic appearance, shines forth. Directed to the front, it illuminates its own fluid vision. Directed downwards it illuminates the pure-lands of magical emanation, and knows the thoughts of all sentient beings.

The fourth is direct intuition of place, which implies knowledge of trikaya's dwelling place in terms of spaciousness, lightform and the four great elements. It constantly clarifies the fluid, evanescent, six-realm environment.

The fifth is direct intuition of karma, which is clear awareness of our own past actions and all migrant beings' present actions and their effects.

The sixth is direct intuition that extends compassionate blessing irradiating all migrant beings appropriately,⁹² and since the six realms are essentially identical, it sees them all as equally tractable. It entails clear intuition of how the six sublime forms of magical emanation emerge.

Best Beloved! If you ask, 'Why is the dharma-eye so called?' It is called the dharma-eye because it clearly sees both the samsaric experience of magical samsaric emanation and the nirvanic experience of the precious dharmakaya free of all conceptual thought. 'Direct intuition' implies direct perception of what is hidden. 'Eye' implies seeing clearly, without thought, like a mirror image.

At that time, with consummate vision, the six self-sprung seminal syllables are Á A HA SHA SA MA.¹ Best Beloved, the fundamental meaning of these six letters is to be found in the dharmakaya ground.

‘Spaciousness’, ‘awareness of presence’ and ‘unchanging wisdom’ are the same, without distinction.

The dimension of magical nirmanakaya emanation subsumes the karmically conditioned body wherein reside the six locations of the seminal syllables, which are glossed as unarticulated buddha-speech.

Emanating from sambhogakaya’s tongue is the mute ground of emerging compassion, and emanating from the six seminal syllables like coils of jeweline thread or spiraling rainbow light, karmically pure apparition manifests through both male and female eyes, while karmically engendered sentient beings issue from the womb.

While riding out of the secret place of Sukhavati on the mare of blissful light, pure pleasure is hidden in an all-pervasive light-seed, like elixir in a vase. Such emanation in a sublime magical dimension functions in the now to benefit all sentient beings, to fulfill the needs of wandering beings. Since such emanation is concept free, the quandary that arises as conflicting purpose is avoided.

Each Tathagata arising from the one preceding, through uncaused timeless emanation the process of buddha-emanation is sustained. Since emanation is done for the sake of all sentient beings whatsoever, it is not directed to any one specific place; doing whatever is beneficial wherever it is required, multifarious magical emanation projected into the ten directions is the agent of conversion. Because ‘like converts like’, whatever is needed for release is thus always provided, provision that is always afforded by the six munis.

To be held on the level of certainty in a pure-land by the hook of gnostic compassion, that is the vision of *holistic perfection*. Later, identity dissolves into dharmakaya, with integration in the undifferentiated matrix of unlocatable all-inclusive awareness, and thereby, finally, *great holistic perfection!*

¹ The consonants in this string appear in other contexts in a different order.

The eighty-eighth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches in brief how those of the highest faculty experience no-release; the distinction between the manner of release of superior, middling and lesser persons; direct recognition of fivefold perfection; the six supersensory perceptions and the way in which gnostic compassion arises; and differentiation of holistic perfection.

89. Release and Compassion: Definition

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please tell us the meaning of 'release' and 'compassion'.

The Teacher responded: Master of the Secret, listen well! We shall tell you here the respective essences, semantic meanings, types and illustrative metaphors of 'release' and 'compassion'.

We affirm that the essence of release is experience of nirvana as samsara dissolves. Here are different specific definitions: Release from the objective world is known essentially through experience of ubiquitous effulgence. Release from the body is, essentially, identity with pure presence in the immaterial jeweline hollow. Release from the mind is, essentially, identity with the intrinsic clarity of pure presence.

'Release' is semantically defined as complete freedom from stressful striving together with freedom from deluded mind.

Its categories – release from the objective world, from body and from mind – have already been explained in the context of the essence.

The similes for release are 'like a snake untying its knots' and 'like a knot in a horse's tail automatically untied'.

The essence of gnostic compassion is defined as the essential incessant fluidity of the dimension of magical nirmanakaya emanation. It is called 'compassion' because it is constantly engaged in dispelling all the potential negativity of dualistic attitudes.

These are the two types of compassion: great and small, unmotivated and motivated.ⁱ

Gnostic compassion is like a fisherman's iron hook or like a lifeboat. Dispelling unawareness, it is like the sun. Curing the dis-ease of suffering, it is like a doctor and like medicine.

The eighty-ninth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the meaning of release and compassion.

90. Metaphors and Similes: Test

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! How would you illustrate the state of being in the karmically conditioned hollow?

How would you illustrate sublimation into the jeweline hollow?ⁱⁱ

How would you illustrate sublimation in the bardo due to present realization?

How would you illustrate nonseparation from present awareness, when the hollow of karmic propensities is abandoned?

How would you illustrate the reversal of delusion?

A person with realization may be confused by disease or adverse circumstances in death, wisdom arising only later. How would you illustrate that?

How would you illustrate the way in which present awareness manifests before dharmakaya has fully embraced the body?

ⁱ Great compassion is 'gnostic compassion' (*thugs rje chen po*, pronounced *tukje chempo*) and small compassion is 'relative compassion' (*thugs rje* pronounced *tukje*), without and with an object, nonconceptual and conceptual (*rtog med dang ni rtog bcas*), respectively.

ⁱⁱ Here 'sublimation' is preferred to 'transference' for *phowa* (*sbubs 'pho ba*).

What would be pithy metaphors to illustrate the three moments of release?

How would you illustrate release in a single moment?

How would you illustrate the immediate recognition of present awareness?

How would you illustrate the inception of present awareness in spacious reality?

How would you illustrate 'nonreturning'?

How would you illustrate the attainment of perfect buddha?

How would you illustrate resumption of consciousness of a person without realization subsequent to unconsciousness in the bardo?

How would you illustrate the self-release of nirmanakaya after its purpose had been achieved?

How would you illustrate sambhogakaya passing into nirvana after conclusion of its purpose?

How would you illustrate multiplicitous essence in a single buddhafield?

How would you illustrate the potentiation of diverse creative expression in singular pure presence?

How would you illustrate the *identity* of the natural condition with *release* from the natural condition?

How would you illustrate the four alternatives?

How would you illustrate self-illuminating present awareness?

How would you illustrate the absence of release in a state of unrealized meditation?

How would you illustrate the intrinsic clarity of vision in the jeweline hollow wherein nothing extrinsic is perceptible?

How would you illustrate the state of delusion encountered initially in the jeweline hollow?¹

How would you illustrate subsequent absence of delusion in the jeweline hollow?

And the Master of the Secret continued: What is the essence of ‘metaphor’? What is its semantic explanation? How is it classified? What is sublime vision?

The Teacher responded: Best Beloved, know this!

Living in a karmically conditioned hollow is illustrated metaphorically by a lion cub or a garuda fledgling.

Sublimation into the jeweline hollow is illustrated metaphorically by a chick hatching from an egg or a snake sloughing off its skin.

Sublimation in the bardo due to present realization is illustrated metaphorically by immediate recognition of a friend from the past.

Nonseparation from present awareness at the moment of sublimation in the hollow of karmic propensities is like a person taking a lamp from the kitchen to show the way out and thus leaving the kitchen in the dark.

The reversal of delusion is illustrated metaphorically by a sudden awakening from sleep.

A person with realization may be confused by disease or adverse circumstances in death, but having attained total recall, his subsequent recollection of wisdom is illustrated metaphorically by the reflection of the moon in a lake, imperceptible after a stone has been thrown into the water, becoming perceptible again when the water is still.

The way that present awareness manifests before dharmakaya is fully amplified is illustrated metaphorically by the light of the sun rising over mountains in the east illuminating the mountains in the west while the eastern mountains remain dark.

¹ The ‘jeweline hollow’ is a synonym of dharmakaya: see chapter 81.

Metaphors for the three moments of release are 'the gathering hook' (the primal ground), which secures us when the five-colored light no longer catches us; 'condensation of distilled essence' as essential reality dissolves into the space of incipient present awareness; and 'a continuous thread of eternal music'.

A single moment of release is illustrated metaphorically as a lion's leap, the radiance of a butter lamp when the vase in which it stands is broken, and a shooting star falling through the sky.

Quick entry of cognition into present awareness is illustrated metaphorically by a golden spoon.

The inception of present awareness in spacious reality is illustrated metaphorically by a rainbow glistening in the sky.

'Nonreturning' is illustrated metaphorically by a thunderbolt and also by a 'lucky' or 'heroic' arrow.

The attainment of perfect buddha is illustrated by the absence of any distinction between mountains and valleys at daybreak,⁹³ by stars reflected in a lake and by the reflection of the moon in water.

After a lapse of consciousness in the bardo, subsequent resumption is like the emergence of a tiny green sprout from a grey seed.

The self-release of nirmanakaya upon completion of its purpose is like the merging of rivers in the ocean or the natural fading of light as the sun sets.

Passing into nirvana is illustrated metaphorically by a rainbow dissolving into the sky.

Multiplicitous presence in a single buddhafield is illustrated metaphorically by the flaming wicks of many butter-lamps creating an indivisible field of light.

The potentiation of multifarious creative expression in unitary pure presence is illustrated metaphorically by different shoots germinating from a single barley seed, different heads of grain developing on each stem and the ripening of many seeds in each head.

The indivisibility of abiding in the natural disposition and being released from it is illustrated metaphorically by the impossibility of a partitioning of space.ⁱ

The 'four alternatives' are illustrated by these four similes: Release, the simultaneity of one and many, is illustrated by the simile 'like gold and its golden color'. Non-release is 'like the deception of an optical illusion' or 'like the image of the moon in water'. Non-release of release is 'like a porcelain pot or a vase'.⁹⁴ Release of non-release is 'like the sun and sunlight'.ⁱⁱ

The signal metaphor for self-illuminating present awareness is inebriation (from *chang*).

The state of absence of release due to unrealized meditation is illustrated metaphorically by a drawing or a sculpture.

Seeing nothing extrinsic in the intrinsic clarity of sublime vision in the precious jeweline hollow is illustrated by the simile 'like guests in a spacious guesthouse, some arriving early and some late, all meeting and sleeping together under a single roof'.ⁱⁱⁱ

The initial state of delusion in the jeweline hollow is illustrated metaphorically by a child failing to recognize its own face in a mirror.

Subsequent absence of delusion is illustrated metaphorically by the child, having matured, recognizing itself in the mirror, or a barley harvest, having ripened, never to turn green again.

Best Beloved, a metaphor is essentially a valid verbally articulated symbol that provides detailed illustration. Its semantic definition is that which reveals meaning by demonstrating similitude. Different types of metaphor illustrate primal ground, creative expression, release and nonduality. The purpose of the metaphoric trope is to induce realization.

ⁱ For the partitioning of space, see also chapter 88 p.201.

ⁱⁱ For the four alternatives, see chapter 94. Perhaps the key to the non-release of release is 'nothing ever happens' and the release of non-release is 'everything is always happening'.

ⁱⁱⁱ As in the vase-body of eternal youth (contributed by Tulku Sangngak).

The ninetyeth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel provides a rehearsal of similes and metaphors together with definitions.

91. Nirvana: The Five Verses

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! How do we pass into nirvana?

The Teacher replied: We have already mentioned how buddha passes into nirvana, but in case you are still uncertain, we will explain it in greater detail, so listen!

1. Wisdom sublimated into space,
The unborn is naturally engendered;
2. The great elements melted into the mother lode,
All attributes are released as they stand;
3. Present awareness vanishing into spaciousness,
All effort dissolves into the primal ground;
4. Wisdom assimilated into space,
Trikaya reveals awareness' intrinsic clarity;
5. Pure presence returning to its primacy,
The sublime immutable vision is revealed.ⁱ

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! If that is the sublime vision of the five spontaneously originated verses,⁹⁵ please elucidate and elaborate them with your great skill in means to your followers so that they are made totally comprehensible.

The Teacher said: Listen, Vajrapani!

1. Four dakini qualities sublimating wisdom are called 'powerful dakini', 'inspiring dakini', 'uplifting dakini' and 'steadfast dakini'.ⁱⁱ

The powerful dakini arises in nondual union.

ⁱ These five verses are elaborated without division in the following explication: the indices are only approximate indicators.

ⁱⁱ Only the particle *ma* appears in the Tibetan to indicate gender. In the absence of an equivalent English suffix, 'dakini' is used.

The inspiring dakini: At first, arising effortlessly, sublime form and present awareness occur in the natural creativity of pure presence ('creative presence'); at last, the retinue is integrated into the five principals and the five principals vanish into the jeweline hollow. No force is employed here; she is called inspiring dakiniⁱ because of her involuntary release.

The uplifting dakini: At this propitious moment, in dharmakaya, which is like a precious jewel, no experience of material phenomena is possible, and spacious reality, which is like the sky, and dharmakaya, which is like the sky, are nondual transparency. Abiding light and pure, ever upwards, this is the uplifting dakini.

The steadfast dakini: At this propitious moment, the breath of present awareness falls into passivity, by virtue of the steadfast dakini.

The four dakinis, qualities of vital energy,ⁱⁱ are to be counted as one.

2. Best Beloved! The elemental dakini has five pacific features. The five delusory great elements are absorbed into the radiance of fivefold present awareness; and the fivefold radiance of present awareness in turn is integrated into the five self-sprung elements.

At this propitious moment, the vital energy symbolized by the vajra-cross becomes the seat, and there it cannot decline. At that propitious moment, the vital energy is like a vajra-cross in its constancy. Then the unmoving vital energy stirs; the water-crystal disc develops;⁹⁶ and undivided wisdom is concentrated in a single matrix – this is water without moisture. All of that comprises immaculate spaciousness.

Again, in the real space of immaculate spaciousness, indwelling presence and emptiness are inseparable. In that space, arising unimpeded in the wisdom-eye, are five vases of light, and the nature of that light is the five family sublime forms in unadulterated clarity. That is the vision.

Best Beloved! Intrinsic clarity cannot be fixated. At that propitious moment, solid earth is released into earth that has no solidity, but in appearance it remains unchanged. Within the unchanging space of its

ⁱ *Shugs*, St. Shakti, implies effortless accomplishment and '*chang*' is glossed herein as (passive) 'bearer'.

ⁱⁱ See chapter 86.

own essence, unadulterated, as already stated, perfectly completed, it is like a stupa. All distinctions evinced in the dualisms of good and bad, great and small, wide and narrow, are now absent; all experience is homogenous. In present awareness of sublime form as its mode of being, awareness of its inception as its mode of appearance, pure empty nondual pleasure as its mode of realization – its modes are inseparable.

Best Beloved! At that propitious moment, as fire with heat is released into fire burning without heat, awareness of presence is free of all thought of extrinsic appearance. The sublime form and present awareness of pure presence exist, but they exist as a nondual reality. When the seed matures into fruit, the fruit remains unchanged; fire, flaming like a lotus, ripens what is unripe. The intrinsic radiance of the awareness of presence transcends the great elements, present awareness transcending light, wisdom transcending the relative mind, in all time abides without birth, cessation or depletion. The all-pervading radiance that does not color space is like the tip of the victory banner.¹

3. All five great elements originally arise from the mother lode, and finally they are released back into the mother lode. Since they have no location, nonabiding, the great elements dissolve into the mother lode. Arising initially in indivisible spaciousness and presence, all five great elements are finally purified and dissolve back into the space from which they arose. That mirrors the precept of present awareness dissolving into spaciousness. As awareness dissolves into spaciousness, discriminating wisdom is resolved, and since no apparent form exists as object, only soft-focused nondual awareness, which is the authentic eye of present awareness, can be said to exist. At that time, wisdom and the dharma-eye have vanished.

Best Beloved! Present awareness dissolves into spaciousness, but it does not become mere nothingness. Present awareness of spaciousness, water without moisture, is integrated internally where there is no interior. Since sublime form and present awareness abide in interior clarity, wisdom reverts to space.

¹ A ritual tubular umbrella (*royal than*) hung on the spike at the pinnacle of a perpendicular rod.

4. To indicate that in more detail, here are four attributes: As sublime form and present awareness dissolve into spaciousness, because pure presence is uncrystalizing in intrinsically clear spaciousness, no dullness arises with its dissolution. No dullness can be, and mind is immaculate. Present awareness of inclusive self-envisionment, which has no concept of extrinsic appearance, is awareness free of fixating thought.

Best Beloved! Nothing but that intrinsic presence itself can truly exist. Through such a realization, appearance appears only very subtly conditioned, and cognizing that truth does not involve any transformation. For example, although the roof of a house appears to obscure the space outside by separating the outside from the inside, looking carefully again, indivisible space remains above the head: space is indivisible. Likewise, although present awareness is occluded in the hollow of karmic propensities, awareness and transparency are still ubiquitously present, and once that is realized, clear light is revealed everywhere. Thus, what is seemingly existent has no substantial identity.

Timeless buddhaⁱ dwells in that real space, but buddha abides in the unthought intrinsic clarity of undivided wisdom. The qualities of pure presence arise in the matrix of presence in the first place, and finally they abide unreified in that matrix. Within the consorts' five vases, each sublime form of present awareness is expressed individually, the self-envisionment free of any intrusion. That reality, unadulterated, remains undivided.

5. At that propitious moment, pure presence resumes its primacy. Since the nondual existential dimension of dharmakaya is unchanging, sublime form (buddha) is empty like a vajra. The eye of awareness of presence shining incessantly within the nondual dimension of dharmakaya, the sambhogakaya dimension of perfect enjoyment is unimpeded, symbolized by the swastika.

At that propitious moment, the five magical nirmanakaya emanation families abiding in the eye of present awareness, the wisdom of those three indivisible existential dimensions swirls into the one matrix,

ⁱ Buddha of 'the great time' encompasses buddha of the three times (*dus gsum gyi sangs rgyas*).

concentrating in the sole all-inclusive, timeless session, abiding in the sole continuous samadhi.

At that propitious moment, release from both perceptual poles occurs, and no extrinsic appearance remains in the self-envisionment. As the two eyes become pure and empty, only the soft-focused eye of awareness' natural clarity remains. Freed from the two dimensions, stainless like a precious jewel, presence dwells naked.

The ninety-first chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel provides a vision of nirvana and explains the five verses that describe it.

92. Nirvana: Definition

Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please explain to us the meaning of 'nirvana'.

The Teacher replied: Best Beloved, listen to this! We shall explain to you the meaning of nirvana in four parts: its essence, semantic definition, types and characterization.

Nirvana is essentially unlocatable all-inclusive awareness.

Nirvana is explained semantically as 'passing beyond the extreme of suffering and abiding in pure, unthought bliss'.

Nirvana is classified as either conditioned or unconditioned nirvana.

Nirvana is characterized as the resolution of all conceptual extremes.

The ninety-second chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the meaning of nirvana.

93. The Eyes

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Clear Nonconceptual Teacher! Please explain the usage of 'the eye'.

The Teacher replied: In all our tantras and agamas, wherever we talk about ‘the eye’, understand it according to this explanation.

The types and essences are as follows: The eye of present awareness is wide open and soft-focused. The dharma-eye is unthinking, clear and omniscient. The eye of wisdom is incisively discriminate. The divine eye is authentic; it has the vision of those whose karmic propensities have been extinguished. Fleshly eyes are clear, serviceable organs of authentic samadhi. ‘Water-bubble’ eyes provide ordinary vision for embodied beings with karmic propensities.ⁱ

They are called ‘eyes’ because they can see clearly without hindrance. The common characteristic of an eye is an absence of any veil or obscurations. The simile for the eye is ‘like the heart of the sun’.

The ninety-third chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the meaning of ‘the eye’.

94. The Four Alternatives: Explanation

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Omniscient Conqueror! Please tell us the meaning of the ‘four alternatives’,ⁱⁱ a phrase often used in your tantras, agamas and upadeshas.

The Teacher replied: Vajrapani, listen attentively! We shall give you the essence, semantic definition, types and illustrative metaphors of the alternatives. The metaphors have already been given. The essence of the four alternatives is given in the two typical examples of time and release.

ⁱ For ‘six eyes’ see GNT.

ⁱⁱ The four ‘alternatives’ or ‘logical possibilities’ (*mu bab*) given here and in chapter 90 regarding release are: release, non-release, non-release of release, and release of non-release. In other contexts the validity of these alternatives (as four conceptual extremes), relating to the eight conceptual components – birth and cessation (*skyed ‘gag*), and nothingness (*relag chad*), being and non-being (*yod med*), appearance and emptiness (*snang stong*), are refuted by application of the tetralemma (refutation of positive, negative, both positive and negative and neither positive nor negative premises): see GNT.

If we distinguish the four alternatives regarding time, we have the juncture of physical consummation; the juncture of creative potentiation of wisdom; the juncture of optimizing supreme present awareness by breaking the physical mold; and the juncture of breaking the mold of compassion in authentic buddha perfection.

In relation to release, these are the four alternatives:

Release from the dualism of one and the many eventuates through the holistic essence of self-sprung awareness. How is that, Best Beloved? The essence or light-seed of self-sprung awareness itself is illuminated by self-sprung awareness. Release occurs in this resolution of the one and the many.

However, until that release occurs, dharmakaya and space are experienced as separate. How is that, Best Beloved? The pure nature of space, the essence of color and dimension, and likewise the essence of the four great elements, is seen as free of all karmic propensity, essentially empty, appearing separate, without presence. Thus the all-embracing essence (light-seed) and dharmakaya, although apparently similar, appear mutually exclusive, and therefore, no release from the dichotomy of the one and the many is possible.

Non-release of release: Relative mind and present awareness have the same primal ground. However, since mind is conceptual and present awareness is nonconceptual, creative expression is not released.

Release of non-release lies in the relation between light-seed and the field of appearance, wherein light-seed is unreified presence and the field of appearances likewise pure presence but as an empty absence.

Release does not occur in a continuum of experience of separate entities, but on the contrary consists of indivisible emptiness and form, as transparent radiance beyond any specific designation. Therefore, even non-release is our release.

The ninety-fourth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel teaches the meaning of the four alternatives.

95. Meaning of the Spoken Word

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Bhagawan Vajradhara! Please teach us the meaning of the spoken word.ⁱ

The Teacher responded: In all the tantras and agamas we have given, whatsoever spoken word is articulated it has a 'spacious grounding' (i), vocalization (ii), function of elimination (iii), and positive benefit (iv).ⁱⁱ A summary of these four topics is taught here.

The 'spacious grounding' of the spoken wordⁱⁱⁱ is comprised of Á and A. These two sounds, potential and actual, are the source of everything. How is that primal ground articulated? MA expresses its nonduality. SA expresses its unchanging nature. HA expresses the self-sprung unreified present awareness in its midst. SHA expresses the wisdom that emerges therein.

KA is the first consonant, and it is comprised of Á and A in the same way that gnostic compassion manifests in two dimensions. KHA shows that those two dimensions, never transcending real space, abide in real space. GA expresses the boundless, unrestricted nature of potential and actual. NGA shows that everything arises in and as nonduality.

TSA shows that the two, potential and actual, are the source of everything. TSHA shows that all experience is known as nondual. DZA shows that unreified gnostic compassion held within that nonduality is without union or separation.

TA shows Á as pure presence. THA shows that abiding in the primal ground Á is liberated. DA shows that through nonduality perception is uncontrived and unaffected. NYA shows that pure presence occurs as

ⁱ The primitive faux etymology of this chapter is in part impenetrable. The nub however appears to be that since Á is the root the branches necessarily partake of its nondual nature.

ⁱⁱ These topics do not appear to be dealt with sequentially.

ⁱⁱⁱ The glyph Á represents the unarticulated opening of the glottis and the muted passage of air through the vocal chords. A is the short vowel sound intrinsic to every consonant. As a unity Á and A represent the primal ground.

present awareness. NA shows that it appears as unrealized sentient being.

PA shows that the nonduality of pure presence is dharmakaya. PHA shows that nonduality appears as incessant skillful means. BA shows that creativity manifests as sublime form. MA shows that trikaya's gnostic compassion lies awake in the trikaya ground.

RA shows that compassion is inseparable from the nondual. LA shows that all experience is diffused by and reabsorbed in the nondual primal ground. Both realization and nonrealization arising in the ground, there is therefore, both 'correct' and 'incorrect'.

In that way, the two 'mothers' Á and A, potential and actual, are the spacious ground of language.

The Á and A are, therefore, vocalizing factors. Adding consonants to the Á, essential meaning is articulated, which is to say 'specified', but, also, the consonant remains pure and simple.

When Á is separated from A, the syllable may become lengthened. HA connected to Ó, for example, the syllable is exalted, vocalizing spontaneous accomplishment: natural articulation in the now, with aspiration, birth and death are transcended. When the vowel U is connected to HA, the syllable is shortened.

Regarding positive benefit, DZA is very useful. Together with PA, HA, RA and SA diffusion is vocalized. PHA and TA are mutually supportive. The reverse THA and the others of that class of sanskritic consonants are short vocalizations.

Just as they are, all in their natural condition, the spoken word is vocalized as spaciousness. Accordingly, all arising from Á, each participating in that value, the value of Á is always partially vocalized. That is the explanation of vocalization of the spoken word.

Since whatever is incompatible with Á is eliminated by Á, each modification compatible with Á also eliminated, everything extraneous, whether compatible or incompatible, is eliminated and there is no 'other'.

(iv) Through delusive conventional conditioning, spoken words co-operate to verbalize specific meanings, and inasmuch as that assists in

potentiating the immanent qualities of the primal ground, the spoken word is extremely useful.

The ninety-fifth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel explains the significance of the spoken word.

96. Clarifying Definitions and Avoiding Errors

Then the Master of the Secret made this request: Compassionate Bhagawan! You have explained the expressions that you have used in your tantras and agamas and upadeshas, but how do we avoid subtle mistakes of interpretation?

The Teacher responded: Vidhyadharas, listen well! All the essential points of tantras, agamas and upadeshas have been explained in this *Circle of Total Illumination* that we have just taught, and the interior structure of all vocalization is implied in the explanations provided above.⁹⁷

Best Beloved, a ‘chapter’ is a particular section of a text containing related material, teaching primarily the topic indicated by its title.

A ‘paragraph’ refers to an interior part of a chapter with its subject matter common to a particular topic.

All ‘holistic light-seed’ or ‘holistic essence’ is to be inferred as unchanging and nonspecific.

All ‘appearance’ is to be considered ‘a field of appearances’, or ‘a vision’.

A ‘place’ or ‘object’⁹⁸ is to be understood as a place (of residence), or ‘an objective field’, a field of appearances or an object of knowledge.

‘Pure presence’ is dharmakaya; it is what is known; it is the antithesis of dead matter, and it is the contrary of ignorance that is ‘absence of presence’.

All ‘immanent qualities’⁹⁹ are always appropriate to the situation and congruent; as a basis and a ground, they are always unreified.

Every 'error' or 'fault' implies an extreme, a case of dualistic perception, diminished presence, intolerance, a damned particularity, a discordant factor, and something to be abandoned.

Every 'final holistic vision'¹⁰⁰ implies a metaphysical view and existential fruition.

Every 'fruition' implies a goal fulfilled, though such goals may be dissimilar and variable.

All 'sublime vision' implies 'bedrock' and 'intrinsic all-embracing identity'.

The notion of 'T' is unfabricated, unmoving, unsurpassable, abiding and unchangeable.

'Intrinsic nature' may imply indeterminacy, incongruity, or 'the common reality of multiplicity'.

Every mention of 'essential all-embracing identity' refers to indivisible pure presence, irrespective of its overt nature.

All movement is creativity

'Breathless movement' is (like) thoughtless creativity.

'Confinement in a hollow'¹⁰¹ implies the presence of obstructive mental constructs.

Wherever the expressions 'like that', 'accordingly', 'similarly' and so on, occur, they refer to the metaphor or simile mentioned either previously or subsequently.

The particle 'that' indicates what has been mentioned previously and is going to be treated now either briefly or extensively.

'That' implies that what has been indicated previously and what has been excluded from that are one

'This' separates meanings.

'All sentient beings' implies a vision of buddha-quality.

Every metaphor or simile is an adornment, a powerful tool, a direct approach and a blessing.

Every use of 'and this also' indicates that a central topic is dealt with either before or after.

'Why', 'for what reason' and 'that is why' refer to some reasoning or justification.

The plural sign, 'without exception' and 'everything', 'all' and so on are expressions subsuming all identical or subsidiary entities.

'Enlightened' (*byang*), qualifies pure presence; 'mind' (*chub*) refers to present awareness; 'enlightenment' (*byang*) is dharmakaya; 'fullness' (*chub*) is sambhogakaya and 'relative mind' (*sems*) is nirmanakaya.

'Pure luminous mind' (*byang chub sems*) is also explained as the ground (*sems*) and its creativity (*byang chub*).

'Reality' is described as 'unchanging', 'the absolute specific' and 'spaciousness'.

'Wisdom' (*shes rab*) is defined as 'nonconceptual and impartial', and differentiating, and noncrystalizing.

A 'lamp' illuminates; 'darkness' is the ignorance that is diminished presence.

'Arising' or 'dawning' can be applied to an occurrence in the field of appearances, to realization or to creativity, where the meaning is self-evident.

'Self-sprung' describes what is uncompounded and defines creativity; and defines a cherished fleeting moment.

'Lightform' is something that has no intrinsic nature and shines without obscuration.

What is signified is 'the ground'; what signifies is 'the means'.

'Unlocatable' or 'nonabiding' implies freedom from conceptual extremes.

'Immaculate' implies thorough-going purity.

'Pure'¹⁰² means experience free of all concrete attributes.

'Selfless' implies an absence of relative identity and freedom from discursive mind.

The primal ground is 'reality', 'dharmakaya' or 'present aware-ness',¹⁰³ as the context demands.

'Creativity' is the light of both samsara and nirvana.

'Display' is described as 'a field of appearances' and 'an aspect'.

'Enlightened behavior'¹⁰⁴ is appropriate activity.

'Perfection' or 'completion' implies that nothing is excluded or 'total inclusivity'.

'Great' implies 'uncontrived' and 'without a superior'.

'Present awareness itself'¹⁰⁵ is cognition of the matrix. It is the primal ground itself. Realizing it is release.

'Dakini' (sky-dancer) can denote 'vajra', present awareness, karma (action) or 'flesh-eating'.

The 'dancer', or 'traveller', in this case refers to sky-dancer, compassionate dancer, and karmic dancer, according to realization.

'Ablaze'¹⁰⁶ describes noncrystalization.

'Behavior'¹⁰⁷ characterizes our lives.

A 'doorway' is a portal for experience and engagement.

A 'key' is something that opens, discloses and releases.

'Holiness'¹⁰⁸ implies fearless commitment with integrity.

'Respect' or 'glory'¹⁰⁹ is an attainment of mutuality.

'Compassion' is either a universal or a blessing.

'Noble individual' refers to someone who has attained the supreme reality and, as a pilot for people, leads them upwards.

‘Human birth’ is the springboard of all birth, our place of origin.

‘Woman’ (*mo*) is the name of wisdom.

‘Skillful means’ is the method of goal-accomplishment.

A ‘branch’ is defined as an extension of what appears to exist.

‘Absence’ implies unchanging, unstructured, simplicity.

‘Gold’ symbolizes immutability.

A ‘scripture’ implies unadulterated tradition.

‘The natural disposition’¹¹⁰ is what is unadulterated.

‘Samsara’ is defined as whatever appears.

‘Becoming’ cannot be stopped.

‘Absence’ has the capacity to appear as something arising from nothing.

‘Bearer’ or ‘holder’¹¹¹ implies the absence of both union and separation.

‘Tantra’, or ‘continuity’, is defined as ‘symbolic representation of a fleeting moment’.

‘Linguistic convention’¹¹² necessitates an agreement based on partiality and bias.

Names’, significant particles of sound,
Such as ‘radiance’ that is self-envisionment,
Defining all ‘experience’, subtle or gross,
Are conceived in ‘dualistic thought’.
‘Buddha’, beyond all such finite experience,
‘Pure presence’ that abhors dualistic perception,
‘Intrinsic radiance’ that infuses the great elements,
Such is transparent self-envisioning presence,
The present awareness beyond all sublime form.
Dharmakaya arising in full knowledge
Envisionment is beyond all words,
Unimaginable, free of extrinsicality.

'Path' implies a place and a doorway.¹¹³

Sentient beings hold incomprehensible concepts.¹¹⁴

'Delusion' describes an inconsistent and scattered mind.

'Mind' provides equivocal, ambivalent, thought and memory.

'Traversing' is moving to and fro; no movement, no traversing!

'Enlightened'¹¹⁵ describes the great bliss of release from suffering.

'To understand' is to know the true meaning.

'To abide' is simply to be without any effort (and to have arrived without any deliberate approach).

A 'boat' refers to a method of release.

'Samadhi' is clarity, or soft-focus.

'Supreme' means 'unrivalled' and 'greatest'.

'Pre-eminent' means 'sublime' or 'exalted'.

'Unsurpassable' means that nothing above or beyond itself existing, it cannot be outshone.

'Vajrasattva' is the very nature of the buddha-teacher, pure presence definitively revealed.

'Profound' means deep or unfathomable; depth is difficult to fathom because it is so subtle.

'Reality' is so-called inasmuch as it 'holds' attributes; it is empty and pure;¹¹⁶ it is dependent upon everything else, and it is the source of all.

A 'bodhisattva' devotes himself to others and accomplishes the spiritual stages.

'The three groups' are buddha, bodhisattvas and sentient beings. Bodhisattva perception is incompatible with buddha above and with sentient beings below. This incompatibility allows a threefold distinction.

'Pure luminous mind' (bodhichitta) is essentially 'nonconceptual impartial knowing' empowered by samadhi; since in itself it is released,¹¹⁷ it cannot be apprehended or defined by discriminating cognition.

Fundamental, inherent karmic propensities are not to be counteracted; such stains of perception are naturally pure – meditation is superfluous. Until that is realized, pure contemplative vision clarifies ephemeral karmic propensities, and by meditative fixation upon an object, karmic propensities that appear to be fundamentally inherent are seen as fleeting.

The function of clarification refers to release in intrinsic radiance; what is so subtle can only be radiance. The metaphors for purity in radiance are 'snow falling on snow', 'ice forming on a lake', and 'a piece of soiled cloth'.

The simile for 'fundamentally inherent' is 'like water in milk'.

'Adventitious(ness)' is evoked by the simile 'like earth in water'.

'Elimination' is evoked by a sword or an iron hook.

'Secret' means what is hidden and cannot be revealed.

'Buddha' is ultimacy.

'Ignorance' is delusion.

Being protected engenders a 'god'.

Beauty engenders a 'goddess'.

Loving kindness engenders a 'lord' or 'guardian' (gompo).

Multifarious creative activity is 'selfless activity'.

'Master', inasmuch as he possesses great power, has vast immanent quality.

Stainless, unchangeable and omniscient is 'buddha mind'.

'Buddha speech' is interpreted by each according to his needs.

Lustrous and splendid describes 'sublime form'.¹¹⁸

'The male and female of a couple' represent skillful means and perfect knowing, respectively.

Bodhisattvas are called 'heirs of buddha' inasmuch as they are born together with ultimate enlightenment.

These semantic definitions are applicable in all the tantras and agamas we have taught. If dispute arises over any meaning, whatever is disputed should be adjudicated by lord, minister and subjects. The process of inquiry and response should be performed in a faultless judicial manner so that evidence is established. When contradictions and superfluities have been eliminated, all considerations appraised, the meaning that has arisen should be etched in stone

Regarding a premise supporting a false view, any argument proven inappropriate should be rejected. Excluding what is wrong, what remains is evidence of what is right. Supportive factors negate opposing support. Awareness of intrinsic presence, the existence of which cannot be refuted or proven, is like a despot's mighty castle. Such evidence is proof sufficient. Three logical arguments and a fourth supporting argument defeat similar negative arguments.

Whatever word is in dispute, such as 'all-inclusive envisionment', when it is debated among friends it should be discussed with question and answer regarding the key meaning and our explanation given herein. When appropriate, a definition will fit every context; when inappropriate it should be rejected. Inasmuch as the meaning is undisputable, free from doubt, firmly established as an 'object of knowledge', it is said to be proven and the appropriate convention and qualms are expunged.

The ninety-sixth chapter of the great tantra Tiklay Kunsel defines meanings and shows how to avoid errors.

97. Entrusting the Tantra

Then the Teacher uttered the following statement entrusting the tantra to Vajrapani and Garab Dorje: Vajrapani, Master of the Secret! This great *Circle of Total Illumination*, an overview of The Great

Perfection, is a key to clarifying the terminology of all of our upadeshas, its meaning increased by verbalization, understanding induced just by reciting it. Vajrapani, it is hereby entrusted to you! Retain it, Garab Dorje! Without addition or subtraction, give it to your retinue assembled here today and your future followers! This secret general commentary is the eye of all tantras and agamas, so proclaim it without any reservation.

Alas, you poor fools! If you belief in dogma and avoid any disparagement of it, you lose the main thread of this *Circle of Total Illumination*, and failing to experience immutable self-sprung awareness, you will take all seemingly substantial thing as real. However, following this *Circle of Total Illumination*, you will surely realize the changeless vision of present awareness!

You may not realize the intangible peace of dharmakaya, but you will not take empty nothingness as real! Follow this *Circle of Total Illumination* and you will realize nondual self-envisionment!

You may not realize either natural perfection or its mode of perception, but you will not take any polarity as true! Without demeaning it, follow this *Circle of Total Illumination* and realization of nondual self-envisionment will ensue!

You may not realize trikaya in either union or separation, but you will not accept the two mentally imputed phases of creation and fulfillment as valid. Avoiding disparagement, if you follow this *Circle of Total Illumination* realization of present awareness, spontaneously perfect, will ensue!

You may not realize the meaning of the inclusive circle of total illumination, but you will not fixate on the specific sound of the letters and the semantic meaning of the words. Rather, you will gain first-hand experience of the *Circle of Total Illumination*, and present awareness will brighten your mind!

Thus spake Vajradhara.

Then Vajrapani and his retinue placed their palms together in homage and circumambulated Bhagawan many times. And Vajrapani said: Bhagawan Vajradhara! This explanatory tantra called *The Circle of Total Illumination* elucidates all tantras, agamas and upadeshas, enlightens the darkness of the ignorance of all of us assembled in this retinue, and

comprehends all the tantras, agamas and upadeshas. This reality-text was spoken by you, the Teacher, Vajradhara, to dissolve the ignorance of this your entire retinue and of future followers. It carries us over the ocean of samsara; it unties the knot of our conflicting emotion; it dispels all intellectual doubt; and it gives us meaning and purpose. It severs the vicious circle of rebirth, establishes us in sublime vision, leads us onto the supreme path of freedom, bestows authority through vision, conveys the meaning of all secret precepts, and establishes the value of the eight lower approaches.

EMAHO! What a wonderful secret! The essence of this definitive explanatory tantra has never manifested, nor can it ever manifest. It is the perfect epitome of the unchanging dharmakaya, released in the matrix of immutable compassion, moved by the breath of self-sprung awareness into the symbolic door of the clarifying lotus. All of us gathered together here, entering the hidden door of awareness, melt into the matrix of all-inclusive present awareness.

So good! So good! It is so good!

With present awareness of trikaya fully perfected, we bow down to the omniscient lord!

The ninety-seventh chapter of the great explanatory tantra of secret precept, called Tiklay Kunsel, The Circle of Total Illumination, explains that through a full understanding achieved by reading, with enormous satisfaction, complete entrustment and sublime tantric vision are conferred.

Here ends the great tantra of secret precept called Tiklay Kunsel, The Circle of Total Illumination, spoken ambiguously, requiring interpolation.ⁱ

This Circle of Total Illumination,
Which is like a third eye,
Should not be hidden from the few,
Nor propagated among the many.
If you violate this injunction,
May the Great Delivererⁱⁱ and his retinue
Cut your life-root and suck your blood!

ⁱ More literally this line reads 'Without any defining syllables or punctuation'
(*tshig bar dang 'bru la nges pa med pa gsungs pa*).

ⁱⁱ Yamaraja, Sgrol byed chen po.

Garab Dorje taught this tantra to Manjushrimitra, and thereafter it was transmitted through a succession of masters and disciples. It was translated into the Tibetan language by the Indian scholar Shri Singha and the Tibetan translator Bairotsana.

Endnotes: Textural References

Tb = Tsamdrak (*Mtshams brag*)

Tk = Tingkye (*Gting skye*)

The suggested textual emendations included in these endnotes represent only the most significant of the readings that appear ambiguous or uncertain.

- ¹ *Purna ye bar zhi, Rdo rje khro gdong ma, Gtsug gi rgyan goig ma, Ro za nang shan thod pa'i 'phreng ba can, rdo rje rlung gi gshog pa can.*
- ² Tb *chos men*; Tk *chos yin*; read *chos min*.
- ³ *Gnas pa dus keyi kun gzhi 'dug tshul brgyad keyi dpe.*
- ⁴ Tb *bad duh*; Tk *bag duh*; read *bag dal*.
- ⁵ Tb *gzhi la dka'*; read Tk *gzhi la bka'*.
- ⁶ Tb *gzhi snang chen po'i dpe la A zhes zer / dpe don rtogs 'gyur 'byor pas O yi sgra / de bzhin rjes 'jug rnams keyis legs par dgongs / bod skad thengs gsum don gyi khog sdebs pas / rang 'byung dpe yi don du 'byor par nges / dpe kha cig ni kun tu rgyug par yang shes par bya'o.* The sense of this paragraph is obscure.
- ⁷ Tb *rang mdangs chen po*; read *rang gdangs chen po*.
- ⁸ Tb *chos men*; Tk *chos min*; read *chos*.
- ⁹ Tb *gzhan yang bod skad theng gsum dang sbyar la/ gzhi mtshon pa'i tshig tu 'gro ba 'byung na/ de dang mthun par 'bru mnan to.*
- ¹⁰ Tb & Tk *zhi gnas keyi ye shes*; read *gzhi gnas keyi ye shes*.
- ¹¹ Tb *zhi gnas*; read *gzhi gnas*.
- ¹² Tb *dus gsum mnyam pa'i dpe'u chung.*
- ¹³ Tb & Tk *zhi gnas keyi ye shes*. Hereafter *zhi gnas* = *gzhi gnas*.
- ¹⁴ Tb *thig le spyi nang rtal.*
- ¹⁵ *Brgyan and rol pa* respectively.
- ¹⁶ Tb *ngas bshad pa rnams ni 'bod skad theng gsum gyis bod pa las 'kehrul gzhi'i 'bru mnan no.*
- ¹⁷ Tb *gnyid*; read Tk *gnyis*.
- ¹⁸ In both Tb & Tk the titles of chapters 18 and 19 are identical.
- ¹⁹ *Dangs ma lnga* and *snyigs ma lnga*.
- ²⁰ Tk *rang gdams*; read Tb *rang dangs* in preference to *rang gdangs* or *rang mdangs*.
- ²¹ Tb (lacuna); read Tk *dbang gis*.
- ²² *Sku phyag rgya*, skt. *kayamudra*.
- ²³ Tb *'bod skad thengs gsum don gyi khog dbub la/ longs sku'i snang ba de bzhin shar.*
- ²⁴ Tb *tshad med ye shes phrin las rnam pa bzhis.*
- ²⁵ Tb *gsal dus*; Tk *gsal du*; read *gsal nus*.
- ²⁶ Tb within *'dul bya zhi dag thugs rje*, read *gzhi dag*.
- ²⁷ *Thun* is to be distinguished from *mtshun* throughout.
- ²⁸ Tb *snying po sku lnga phyag rgya mi 'gag pa.*

- ²⁹ Tb *me ri 'bar ba'i rtse mo.*
- ³⁰ Tb *blo yis gnyis kyī mur 'dzin pa.*
- ³¹ Tb & Tk *mnyam*, read *nyams*.
- ³² See Appendix 2 and Keith Dowman 2010 Canto 46 for translation of Longchenpa's recension of this passage.
- ³³ *Ibid* Canto 85. Also Keith Dowman 2013, *Original Perfection*, p.67: Inner and outer are one, the inner the outer itself,/ So there are no hidden depths to discover.
- ³⁴ *Ibid* Canto 49
- ³⁵ *Ibid* Canto 69
- ³⁶ *Ibid* Canto 115
- ³⁷ *Ibid* Canto 23
- ³⁸ Tb *rnal 'byor shes rab rtsal chung la.*
- ³⁹ Tk *gar sbyin la 'brangs bu'i 'dab ma chags.*
- ⁴⁰ Tb *'byung ba ma la gzha'*; Tk *'byung ba ma la bzhaq.* 'Resting in the elemental matrix.'?
- ⁴¹ Tb *Rang las byung, rang las snang, rang las gsal.*
- ⁴² Tb *gol sar 'gro*; Tk *grol sar grol.*
- ⁴³ Tb read *mi sgom ma sgom pa'i don shes pas* (nonmeditation between sessions); Tk *mi sgom bsgom pa'i dus shes pa*, 'nonmeditating meditation' (nonmeditation in sessions).
- ⁴⁴ Tb & Tk *sgom pa'i mi sgom don shes pas* (nonmeditation in sessions).
- ⁴⁵ Tb *byin*, read Tk *brjid*.
- ⁴⁶ Tb *de yis rnam rtog shar*, Tk *de la rnam rtog shar.*
- ⁴⁷ Tb *rtog*; Tk *rtogs*. See also endnotes 53 and 58.
- ⁴⁸ Tb *thabs keyis zin pas.*
- ⁴⁹ Tb *rang mdangs.*
- ⁵⁰ Tb *chu yi sgrol ma*, read *chu yi sgron ma.*
- ⁵¹ Tb *dper na blon po btson du bzung bas gros blo dang bya byed mkhan med pa lta bu'o / lus dang ma phral bas dbugs yod de / rig pa la rta yod pas blon po lta bu'o / btson du zin pa dang dra ste/ rtog pa'i rgyu yod la rgyu mi nus pa'o.* But see also chapter 86.
- ⁵² *Sems dpa' rtsa bdun.*
- ⁵³ Tb *nor bu chu 'dangs*; Tk *nor bu chu mdangs.*
- ⁵⁴ Tb *ngang dangs*, read Tk *ngang mdangs.*
- ⁵⁵ Tb *kun las 'phags pa'i che ba.*
- ⁵⁶ Tb & Tk *spags te*, read *'phags te.*
- ⁵⁷ Tb *so gnyis rtsa bryad rim pas spyod / sgrib pa bzhin du drug tu gnas*; Tk *sa gnyis rtsa bryad rims pas spyod / sgrib pa bzhi dang drug tu gnas.*
- ⁵⁸ Tb *gzhan yang bod skad thengs gsum don gyi khog sdebs la/ kun gsal nang 'dir bstan pa bzhin du bshad.*
- ⁵⁹ *Don gyi mtshan nyid rnam par bzhi.*
- ⁶⁰ Tb read *bstan khri*; Tk *bsnan khri.*

- 61 Tb *derugs pas thags keyi dpun bzhin no*.
 62 Tb *rim pas bab lugs*.
 63 Tb *gzhi rdzogs rig pa'i rtsal dbang*.
 64 Tb *bum pa'i dbang*.
 65 Tb *rgyal po rang riags phyag rgya'i dbang*.
 66 Tb *brjed pa med pa'i gzungs*.
 67 Tb & Tk *rlog pa* 'conceptual thought'; read *rtogs*.
 68 Tb *ye shes spyi lugs*.
 69 Tb *dbang rdzas bzhi*. See
 70 Tb *phye dang bsdu pa yin*.
 71 Tb *'dam bu'i phur ba*; Tk *'dam pa'i phur ba*. Read *'dam bu'i phor ba* (Tulku Sangngak).
 72 Tb *rlog pa*; Tk *rtag pa*. Read *rtogs pa*.
 73 Tb *nyi shu rtsa gcig dang sum chu rtsa lnga rnams / bco lnga'i 'dug tshul yon tan zur tsam yin*: the meaning of these lines is obscure.
 74 Tb *skad cig skyod pas*.
 75 Tb *Byod song gnyis la snang ba gnyis / dbyingd na gnas pa mun pa ste / kha 'thor gnas pa gnyen thur snang*.
 76 Tb *mig gnas*; read Tk *mi gnas*.
 77 Tb *ngo sprod bzhi'i dgongs pa*.
 78 Tb *rab 'breng*; Tk *rab 'bring*.
 79 See Appendix 2 and Keith Dowman 2010, Canto 90.
 80 *Mtshon gji gru gu (dru bu) bsdoms pa bzhin*.
 81 Tb *srog pa rtsa (srog rtsa)*.
 82 See chapters 28 and 29.
 83 Tb *mngon shes chos chen*.
 84 *Rnam pa kun mkhyen ye shes*.
 85 Tb *las dag gang zag nam par gnyis*.
 86 Tb *lus keyi rgyud las sems keyi rgyu shar bas*.
 87 See Keith Dowman 2010 Canto 10.
 88 Tb *rlung gi rlung*.
 89 Tb *'pho ba rdzings pa*.
 90 Tb *rtags keyi gsang ba sgo*: the location of the uma (between the eyebrows?).
 91 Tb *shar ba cig car shar ro*.
 92 Tb *'thun pa'i sems can*; read, Tk *mtshun pa'i sems can*.
 93 Tb *nam langs pas ri lungs med par gsal ba lta bu dang*.
 94 Tb *kham pa dang bum pa lta bu*.
 95 Tb *rang byung tshig lnga'i dgongs pa*.
 96 Tb *chu shel gyi 'khor lo brtsegs legs te*.
 97 Tb *gnas skabs thams cad keyi 'bod skad keyis sdebs la / gong du ngas bshad pa rnams su 'bru mnan no*.
 98 *yul*
 99 *yon tan*

- 100 *grub mtha'*
 101 *stubs can rtog bcas*
 102 *dag pa*
 103 *chos nyid, chos sku, ye shes*
 104 Tb & Tk *mdza' spyod*; read *mdzad spyod*.
 105 *ye shes nyid*
 106 *'bar ba*
 107 *mdzad spyod*
 108 *dam pa*
 109 *dpal*
 110 Tb & Tk *rag lugs*; read *rang lugs*.
 111 *chang ba*
 112 *tha snyad*
 113 *gnas dang 'jug sgo*
 114 Tb *sems can ma shes pa'i rtog bcas so*.
 115 Tb *byang chub*.
 116 Read Tb *nam par dkar ba dang gzhan la brien pa*; Tk *nam par dka' ba dang*
 gzhan la rten pa.
 117 Tb *bsgoḥ*; read Tk *bsgrol*.
 118 *Sku*

Appendix 1: The Mandala of Vairochana

The mandala of Vairochana is expressed in three ways in this appendix. All of them employ the basic categories of the three existential dimensions (trikaya).

In the first, under the heading ‘The Existential Elements of the Mandala’, the elements of sublime vision, the vision of the great perfection, are listed in the technical vocabulary of Dzogchen excerpted from the *Tiklay Kunsel*.

In the second, under the head ‘The Forty-Two Sambhogakaya Deities in Five Family Mandala Groups’ the unitary trikaya vision is elucidated in terms of the forty-two anthropomorphic symbolic representations of the elements of sublime vision, all representations belonging to the sambhogakaya and categorized according to the five families.

In the third presentation, under the heading, ‘Forty-two Sublime Forms in Trikaya Grouping’ (described in chapter 29), the unitary vision is elaborated under the three trikaya headings categorized according to the degree of creativity (*rtsal*) expressed by the buddha representations, which is effectively the distance from the center of the mandala.

The Existential Elements of the Mandala

1. Relating to Dharmakaya

Unity, nonduality

the zero-dimension
nonabiding awareness of the now
the field of \hat{A}
the clear light of all
the field of reality

present awareness
spaciousness
unitary five sublime forms

unitary three dimensions (trikaya)
buddha

2. Relating to sambhogakaya

Fivefold Present Awareness
unitary all-inclusive five
immutability and the unchanging, unimpeded field
sameness and sameness of the field
compassionate creativity and a hot and devotional field
consummate activity and self-released field

Attributes of Nonduality
the five families and symbols
the forty-twofold psychophysical attributes
the five-colored light

immutable and uncrystalizing
a vastness of potential
breadth and depth of wisdom
source of gnostic compassion
immaculate and stainless
immanent sublime vision
source of selfless activity

the pure nature of:
the five body-mind aggregates
the five great elements
the five objective sensory fields
the five afflictive emotions

3. Relating to nirmanakaya

the five fields of sensory perception (the objects of consciousness)
and the sense organs and consciousness as nondual (see chapter 41
and chapter 54).

compassion manifest as the eight consciousnesses and the eight fields
of consciousness.

pure presence manifests in the five aspects of present awareness and
its ground of clarity as below:

pure presence of mirror-like awareness and the ground of its clarity; and unimpeded gaze and simultaneity of gaze and clarity: Charm and Flower.

pure presence of awareness of sameness and the ground of its clarity; and clarification of actual stains: Rosary (or Garland) and Incense.

pure presence of discriminating awareness and the ground of its clarity; and ideation and its clarification: Song and Light.

pure presence of all-accomplishing awareness and the ground of its clarity; and what is born and the time of birth: Dance and Taste.

freedom from the four misconceptions of reality as blissful, permanent, substantial and true.

freedom from the conceptual extremes of eternalism, nihilism, egoic self, and substantial nature.

endowment with the four boundless qualities: loving kindness, sympathetic joy, compassion and equanimity.

the activity of the six bodhisattva siddhamunis emanated into the six realms, demonstrating the purity of passion and the purity of activity in their respective realms.

The Forty-Two Sambhogakaya Deities in Five Family Mandala Groups

NB Contents of square brackets provide *Longchen Nyintik* values.

Adi-buddha [2]

Samantabhadra, Kuntuzangpo, *Kun tu bzang po*, The All-good Adi-buddha: present awareness.

Samantabhadri, Kuntuzangmo, *Kun tu bzang mo*, The All-good female Adi-buddha: spaciousness of reality.

Buddha Family [2]

Vairochana, Nampar Nangdze, *Nam par snang mdzad*, Manifesting Universal Multiplicity: awareness of unitary space, white, form aggregate, ignorance (fear). •

[Dhatishvari, Yingi Wongchukma, *Dbying gyi dbang phyug ma*, Space-Lady, space element.]

Vajra Family [6]

Akshobhya, Mikyopa, *Mi skyod pa*, The Unshakeable, Immoveable: blue, mirror-like awareness, consciousness aggregate, anger.

Buddhalochana, Sangye Chenma, *Sang rgyas spyan ma*, Clear-Eyed Buddha: earth element.

Kshitigarbha, Sainyingpo, *Sa yi snying po*, Earth-Essence: presence of mirror-like awareness [eyes consciousness].

Maitreya, Jampa, *Byams pa*, Loving Kindness: clarity of mirror-like awareness [organ of eyes].

Lasya, Gekmoma, *Sgeg mo ma*, Charm: unimpeded gaze [objects of form].

Pushpa, Metokma, *Me tog ma*, Flower: simultaneity of gaze and clarity [thought of the past].

Jewel Family [6]

Ratnasambhava, Rinchen Jungne, *Rin chen byung gnas*, Jewel Source: yellow, awareness of sameness, feeling aggregate (vedana), pride.

Mamaki: water element.

Samantabhadra, Kuntuzangpo, *Kun tu bzang po*, All-good: presence of awareness of sameness [nose organ].

Akashagarbha, Namkhai Nyingpo, *Nam mkha'i snying po*, Space-Essence: clarity of awareness of sameness [nose consciousness].

Mala, Tengwa, *Phreng ba*, Rosary/Garland: clarification of stains [objects of smell].

Gandha, Dukupoma, *Dug spos ma*, Incense: clarification of stains [present thought].

Lotus Family [6]

Amitabha, Wopakme, *'Od dpag med*, Boundless Light: red, discriminating awareness, concept aggregate; desire.

Pandaravasini, *Dgos dkar can*, White Gown: fire element.

Avalokiteshvara, Chenrezik, *Spyan ras grags*, Tearful Gaze: presence of discriminating awareness [tongue consciousness].

Manjushri, Jampel, *'Jam dpal*, Tender Glory: clarity of discriminating awareness [tongue organ].

Gita, Luma, *Glu ma*: Song: ideation [objects of sound].

Aloka, Marme, *Mar me*, Lamp: clarification of ideation [thought of the future].

Vajra-Cross Family [6]

Amoghasiddhi, *Don yod grub pa*, All-Accomplisher: green, all-accomplishing awareness, volition aggregate (samskara), jealousy.

Samayantara, Damtsik Drolma *Dam tshig sgröl ma*, Commitment-Savior: air element.

Vajrapani, Chaknadorje, *Phyag na rdo rje*, Vajra-in-Hand: presence of all-accomplishing awareness [ear consciousness].

Sarvanivarana-viskambhin, Dripanamsel, *Sgrub pa nam sel*, Cloud Dissolver: clarity of all-accomplishing awareness [ear organ].

Nritya, Garma, *Gar ma*: Dance: what is born [objects of taste].

Gandha, Drichabma, *Dri chab ma*: Taste: the time of birth [abstract thought].

Doorkeepers [8]

Four Male doorkeepers: [From Thrinley Norbu 1993: Amritakundali – tactile consciousness, Hayagriva – tactile sensation, Mahabhala – body organ, Yamantaka – body consciousness] four freedoms from misconception that the deluded experiences of samsara are permanent (*rtag*), true (*bden*), pleasant (*bde ba*) and concrete (*mtshan ma*).

Four Female Doorkeepers [Thrinley Norbu 1993: Herukas with ankusha – hook, pasha – noose, sphota – chain, gantha – bell] freedom from the four conceptual extremes of eternalism, nihilism, egoism and materialism, or four boundless qualities of loving kindness, sympathetic joy, compassion, equanimity.

Siddhamunis [6]

[From Thrinley Norbu 1993: Mahindra, Vemachitra, Sakyamuni, Singha, Jvalamukha, and Dharmaraja aka Yamaraja]; Bodhisattva adepts of the six realms [gods, demons, human beings, hungry ghosts, devils and animals].

Two seeming anomalies in this mandala should be noted: First, Dhatishvari, the consort of Vairochana, is absent, and thus the forty-two attributes of sambhogakaya are reduced to forty-one. The name Dhatishvari is not mentioned in the tantra.

Secondly, the white color of Vairochana is associated with the aggregate of form and the blue body of Akshobhya is associated with consciousness, whereas a logical grouping would reverse this denomination. Likewise, a logical designation would associate earth with form and space with consciousness. This apparent inconsistency is resolved by the recognition of form as light (or lightform) and consciousness as a mere sensory function. In later more sophisticated mandalas, Akshobhya (frequently as Vajrasattva) and Vairochana would exchange places.

Forty-two Sublime Forms in Trikaya Grouping (Chapter 29)

Regarding the classification of trikaya,

Firstly, dharmakaya trikaya:

Changeless, unidentifiable presence is dharmakaya dimension of dharmakaya. Uninterrupted intuition of presence as the five sublime forms of wisdom is the sambhogakaya enjoyment dimension of

dharmakaya. The five sublime forms emanating as ‘what is converted’ is the magical nirmanakaya dimension of dharmakaya.

Dharmakaya trikaya is also called ‘the triad of essence, nature and compassion’ (*ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum*); ‘the three existential dimensions inherent’ (*gzhi la gnas pa'i sku gsum*); ‘the presence of fruition in the ground’ (*'bras bu gzhi la grub pa*); ‘the great inversion of trikaya’ (*sku gsum ja log chen po*); and also ‘fruition within fruition’ (*'bras bu 'bras bu'i ngang la gnas pa*).

Secondly, sambhogakaya trikaya:

The all-inclusive dharmakaya dimension of sambhogakaya is Mahavairochana, the Universal Illuminator. The sambhogakaya enjoyment dimension of sambhogakaya is composed of the members of the four families. The magical nirmanakaya dimension of sambhogakaya is composed of the male and female bodhisattvas.

Their different epithets are: ‘the moment of clearly manifest fruition’ (*'bras bu mngon par gsal ba'i dus*) and ‘differentiated trikaya’ (*sku gsum nam par gzbag pa*). Such are the three dimensions of sambhogakaya.

Sambhogakaya–Dharmakaya Mahavairochana (The Sixth)

Sambhogakaya–Sambhogakaya

Vairochana, Nampar Nangdze, *Nam par snang mdzad*, Multiplicitous
Manifestation

Akshobhya, Mikyopa, *Mi skyod pa*, The Unshakeable, Indestructible
Amitabha, Wopakme, *'Od dpag med*, Boundless Light
Ratnasambhava, Rinchen Jungne, *Rin chen byung gnas*, Jewel Source
Amoghasiddhi, Donyo Drupa, *Don yod grub pa*, All-Accomplisher.

Buddhalochana, Sangye Chenma, *Sang rgyas spyan ma*, Clear-Eyed Buddha
Pandaravasini, Gokarmo, *Dgos dkar mo*, White Gown

Mamaki

Samayatarā, Damtsik Drolma, *Dam tshig sgrol ma*, Commitment-Savioress

Sambhogakaya–Nirmanakaya

Samantabhadra, Kuntuzangpo, *Kun tu bzang po* (All-good)

Akashagarbha, Namkhai Nyingpo, *Nam mkha'i snying po*, Sky-Essence

Kshitigarbha, Sainyingpo, *Sa'i snying po*, Earth-Essence

Maitreya, Jampa, *Byams pa*, Loving Kindness

Avalokiteshvara, Chenrezik, *Spyan ras gzigs*, Tearful Eyes

Manjushri, Jampel, *'Jam dpal*, Tender Glory

Vajrapani, Chaknadorje, *Phyag na rdo rje*, Vajra-in-Hand
 Sarvanivarana-viskambhin, Dripanamsel, *Sgrib pa rnam sel*, Cloud Dissolver

Gita (Song), Aloka (Light), Lasya (Charm), Pushpa (Flower), Mala (Garland), Dhupa (Incense), Nritya (Dance), Gandha (Taste).

Thirdly, nirmanakaya trikaya:

The four families represent the dharmakaya dimension of nirmanakaya. Male and female bodhisattvas represent the sambhogakaya dimension of enjoyment. The spreading light of gnostic compassion is the dimension of magical nirmanakaya emanation [see chapter 31]. The Eight Doorkeepers.

Appendix 2: Longchenpa's *Gnas lugs mdzod* Quotations

In his auto commentary on the *Gnas lugs mdzod* Longchen Rabjampa quotes extensively from the *Thig le kun gsal*. Whether he was quoting from a text other than what has come down to us or editing that text cannot be known, but a comparison between his quotations and our versions of the *Thig le kun gsal* is instructive and illuminating. The *Thig le kun gsal* version quoted below is the *Mtshams brag* [Tb] version. The rounded brackets contain the *Thig le kun gsal* [TKS] version, while Longchenpa's amendments in the *Gnas lugs mdzod* [GLD] are given within square brackets. References to an English translation of the *Gnas lugs mdzod* refer to Keith Dowman 2010 [NP].

TKS Chapter 40; Tb p.368-1 to 370-3

(de nas yang gsang ba'i bdag pos zhus pa
kye kye bcom ldan rdo rje 'chang
theg brgyad lta sgom spyod pa dang
'bras bu mthar phyin de ltar na
yang dag nges pa'i lta ba gang
zhes zhus so
ston pas bka' stsal pa)

Tb 368-3; NP p.140 Canto 46

(lta) [bltar] med lta ba'i don bstan pa
(%a ti yo ga) gza' gtad (bral) [med pa'i lta bas te]
dngos med ye shes zang thal bas
rang rig ye shes lhun gyis grub
de las ma (rtogs) [gtogs] gzhan med pas
so so('i) rang rig ye shes la[s]
ci[r] snang ye shes chen po'i gdangs
ye nyid bcom ldan rdo rje 'chang
de bas gzhi (snang) [nas] rdzogs sangs rgyas
(sangs rgyas med pas) [yul med] gzung 'dzin nam par dag
rang rig ye shes rang gi gdangs la bzhugs
(byung bzhi) rang bzhin dag pa'i nam mkha' la
chos nyid don gyi nam mkha' (ye nas) khyab
chos nyid don gyi nam mkha' la
rang rig ye shes nyi ma shar
phyogs ris med pa(r) kun (tu) [la] gsal

Tb p.368-6; NP p.144 Canto 50

[rang byung ye shes rgya mtsho na]
yid kyi mam rtog ci 'gyu yang
(ma phang ma tshol) [mtsho la] gser gyi nya mo 'gyu

TKS 40; Tb 368-7; NP p.191 Canto 85

ma 'gags rang bzhin med pa'i don
(ltas kyin) [ltas shing] btsal bas (rtog) [mthong] nyed bral
phyi nang gnyis ka phyi nyid (nang) [na'ang]
zab mo('i) cha shas rtog(s) yul (bral) [med]
(phyi nang snod bcud tham cad kun
byis pa skye bo mams la snang mod kyang)

Tb 369-1; NP p.143 Canto 49

lta ba rang rig dngos med zang thal la
dngos po'i mtshan ma ye nas mam par dag
kun bzang zhal ni phyogs bcu kun tu gzigs
yum gyi bha ga bde klong gcig tu 'khyil
de bas khams gsum ma lus thig le chen po gcig gi ngang
(lta ba mam dag rang rig ye shes la
sang rgyas med pas sems can ming yang med
sems can med pas khams dang 'byung ba med)

Tb 369-3; NP p.168 Canto 69.

man shel sku ltar (rang gis rgyud dag pas) [rang bzhin mam par dag]
dri med zang thal dag pa chos kyi sku
sa chu me rlung nam mkhar snang ba yang
ma rtogs blo la mtshan (ma sna tshogs kyis) [mar snang mod kyi]
snang la rang bzhin med (pa) [de] ye shes gdangs su gsal
dper na mkha' la 'ja' tshon (snang ba) [gsal ba] yang
mkha' las logs (su) [na] med (kyang) [de] logs ltar snang
(mkha' yi nang na gsal zhing mkha' dang mi phyed ltar)
[nam mkha'i ngang gnas mkha' ltar dbyer mi phyed]
chos nyid chos sku dbyer med don gyi nam mkha' la
rang shar rang snang rang gsal ye shes gdangs
logs ltar snang zhing 'gag pa med par gsal
gsal la rtog med ye shes chos kyi sku
rang la rang snang (snod bcud) [longs sku] (yang) [ye] sangs rgyas
(las dang thugs rje mtha' mams mam par dag)
[thugs rje sprul sku mtha' gnyis mam par dag]

Tb 369-7; NP p.232 Canto 115

sa dang nam thar byang chub mchog la (ring) [reg]
 bgrod du 370 med (pa'i) [de] chos nyid byang chub mchog
 bgrod par 'dod na ye shes mtha' la(s) ring
 ma bsags bzhin du tshogs gnyis ye nas rdzogs
 ma sbyangs bzhin du sgrib gnyis ye nas (sbyangs) [byang]

(ma byung ma skyes 'od kyi dkyil 'khor la
 bkod pa lha yi dkyil 'khor sgom mi dgos
 dkyil 'khor khro gnyer cha lugs kyis
 khro bdag chen po'i skur sgoms la
 sku gsung thugs kyi bzlas pa dag
 chu bo'i rgyun ltar bzlas na yang
 rang rig ye shes rgyab kyis phyogs)

(ye nas byas zin da bsodod btsal du med
 ched du byar med chad [ched] du sgom du med
 mar me'i snying po rang gi 'od la gnas pa ltar
 rang rig ye shes rang gi gdangs la gnas
 'das dang ma byon da ltar sangs rgyas dang
 gnyis med ro gcig chu la chu bzhag bzhin
 ces gsungs so)

*(thig le kun gsal chen po las rdzogs pa chen po'i lta ba ma nor bar bstan pa'i le'u
 ste bzhi bcu pa'o)*

TKS Chapter 41; Tb 370-6 to 371

(de nas yang gsang ba'i bdag pos zhus pa
 kye kye ston pa rdo rje 'chang
 sgom du yod med bye brag ji ltar lags
 zhes zhus so
 de nas yang ston par bka' stsal pa
 rdo rje 'dzin pa legs zung zhig)

Tb 370-7; NP p.103 Canto 23

ngas bstan gnyis med [rang byung] bde chen la
 sgom du yod med gnyis kyi mtha' dang bral
 shes rab stobs can rang rig don rtogs la
 sgom dang mi sgom tha snyad nam par dag
 gnyis med bde chen (ngang du 'du 'bral med) [rang gi ngang la gnas]
 ma (btsal) [rtsol] gzahag pas (ngang las ma g.yos gsal) ['du 'bral yongs kyis
 med]
 rgyun chad med pas chu bo gangaa bzhin
 dbang po yang rab don du de bstan no

TKS Chapter 88; Tb 453-7 to 454

(de nas yang gsang ba'i bdag pos zhus pa
 kye kye ston pa rnam par grol
 spyi yi grol lugs de ltar na
 rab 'bring tha ma'i grol lugs rnams
 ma nor rim pas gsung du gsol
 ces zhus so
 ston pas bka' stsal pa)

Tb 454; NP p.200 Canto 90

dbang po yang rab gyur pa la
 ye nas zang thal chen po la(s)
 bar do med cing skad cig med
 da lta nyid du gnas pa yin
 rang bzhin dag pa'i nam mkha' la
 chos nyid gsal ba'i ngo bo gnas
 de la rig pa zang thal shar
 shar ba ma yin gnas pa yin
 dper na nam mkha' zang thal la
 khang khyim byas pas (nam mkha') gud du bcad
 khang pa'i nang gi nam mkha' dang
 rang bzhin dag pa'i nam mkha' gnyis
 sgo ('am) [yi] mthong[s] nas sgrib med (pas) [par]
 nam mkha' gnyis po sgrib med gsal
 bag chags sbubs kyi rig pa dang
 mkha' na gnas pa'i rig pa gnyis
 ye shes sgo yis mtshams sbyar nas
 bag chags lus kyis ma bsgribs par
 gnyis med zang thal chen por gnas
 rtog[s] pa'i don chen de ldan na
 seng ge mchongs pas sa chod ltar
 ye shes zang thal chen po yis
 bar do'i skye 'gag mi gnas par
 rin chen sbubs kyi nang du gcod
 de bas ye grol chen por (bshad) [gnas]

de la rtsis gdab mi bya'o
 ji ltar don brjod mi shes pa'i
 dbang po dman pa'i gang zag la
 grol lugs rtsis gdab bya ru med
 byas kyang nges pa mi rnyed pas
 skye ba gcig gis thogs par bshad
 de nas de nyid 'phrad par 'gyur

Appendix 3: Texts Cited

Chapter 42 of the *Tiklay Kunsel* lists 20 exemplary texts; all but the four tikas are tantras. 11 are unidentified or unlocated; of the 9 texts identified in the *Tsamdrak* (Tb) version of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*, in their colophons 3 identify Bairotsana and 2 identify Vimalamitra as the Tibetan translator; 2 identify themselves as Mind Series texts. Of the remaining 4 texts mentioned in the *Thig le kun gsal*, 3 are Mind Series tantras and the 4th is unknown.

Abbreviations:

TBRC = Tibetan Buddhist Research Center

THL = The Himalayan Library

Pt = *Ka pa dpal brtsegs*

Ng = *Nyingma Gyuebum*

Tb = *Mtshams brag*

Tk = *Gting skye*

Dg = *De ge* (Derge)

Texts Listed in Chapter 42

1. The Swirling Lotus

Padma 'khyil ba

'A tantra of sublime form'

[See THL Pt 72 TBRC W21519]

[In the *Bairo rgyud 'bum*]

2. The Vajra Peak Epitome

Rdo rje rtse mo 'dus pa

'A great tantra of buddha speech'

[See THL Tk 113 Pt 73 Ng89 Tb408]

[Translated by Vimalamitra and Ka cog]

3. The Heap of Jewels

Rin chen spungs pa

'A great tantra of buddha mind'

[See THL Pt 54 (*Yon tan chen po ston pa*) Tb 329 Translated by

Padmasambhava and Ka pa dpal brtsegs

[Many versions]

4. Fashioning Loving Kindness

Byams pa brtsegs pa

'A great tantra of immanent buddha-quality'

[Unlocated]

5. The Sun of the Clear Sky

Mkha' gsal nyi ma

'A tantra of selfless activity'

[Unlocated]

6. Paramount Present Awareness

Ye shes bla ma

'Tantra of secret precept'

[See THL Pt 74; translated by Vimalamitra; Tk 114 Tb 235/6]

7. Churning the Depths of Samsara

'Khor ba dong sprugs

'The nub of the view'

[See THL Pt 77 Tk 117, Tb 436]

8. The Cross-Necked Peacocks

Rma bya 'jing bsnol

'Secret precept'

[See TBRC Tk W21518; Tb W21521; THL Tk 60 Tb 90]

Tb Vol 4 pp.158-175. Trans: Christopher Wilkinson 'Grabbing the Peacock by the Neck'

9. The Light of Spontaneity

Rgyud chen 'od zer chen

'Secret precept of the form dimension'

[Unidentified]

10. The Tantra of the Four Sons and Four Mothers

Rgyud keyi bu bzhi ma bzhi

[Unidentified]

11. Secret Awareness

Ye shes gsang ba

'A key to all tantras'

[See THL Tk 80 Pt 100; Upadesha tantra; trans: Bairotsana and Shri Singha. Translated into English by Christopher Wilkinson]

12, The All-Inclusive Vision

Dgongs pa kun 'dus

'A great tantra of secret precept'

Possibly = *Kun 'dus rig pa'i rgyud*

See below

13. The Universal Treasury

Kun gyi mdzod rgyud

'The great treasury of the Mind Series'

[Unidentified] Referring perhaps to the *Kun byed rgyal po*

14. The Essential Tantra of Vajradakini

Rgyud kyi snying po Rdo rje mkha' 'gro ma

[Unidentified]

15. The Four Series of Manjushri

Jam dpal sde bzhi po

'A sovereign tantra'

[Unlocated]

16. The Four Tika Commentaries

a) The Great Tika of Secret Precept on the Ground of Delusion

'Khrul gzhi'i man ngag ti ka chen po

[Unlocated]

b) The Tika of the Ineffable Zing of Reality as the Birth of Present Awareness Through the Reversal of Delusion.

'Khrul pa log nas ye shes skye ba de kbo na nyid kyi ti ka

[Unidentified]

c) The Great Tika of Agama Instruction

Lung gi ti ka chen po

[Unidentified]

d) The Tika of the Ineffable Zing of the Reality of Essential All Embracing Identity

Bdag nyid chen po de kbo na nyid kyi ti ka

[Unidentified]

Ti ka in Tibetan is a transliteration of the Sanskrit 'tika'; it is sometimes translated into Tibetan as *'gre/ pa* 'commentary', 'a text that provides an explanation or commentary to a root text (*rtsa ba*)'.

17. The Precious Garland

Rin chen 'phreng ba

‘A sovereign transmission, secret precept’

[THL Tb 159, Tk 48, Dg 138; ‘Mind Series’, translated by Sri Singha and Bairotsana]

Mind Series Texts

1. The Eternal Victory Banner

*Bstan pa mi nub rgyal mtshan ni:**gsang ba'i rig pa rgyud chen lnga*

‘The Eternal Victory Banner:

The five great tantras of secret presence’.

In chapter 58, as one of the five excellences of dharmakaya the teaching is identified as the ‘*Mi nub rgyal mtshan*, the five great tantras of secret presence’. The title *Mi nub rgyal mtshan* was widely used to head texts belonging to the cycle of *Nam mkha' che* tantras and associated literature, although what five great tantras had the ‘secret presence’ label is unclear. The Fifty-five Verses *lung* and the *Mi nub rgyal mtshan nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud* provide an essential window on Dzogchen. ‘The five great tantras of secret presence’ are probably not to be identified with the five early translations of Bairotsana, of which the *Mi nub rgyal mtshan Nam mkha' che* is primary. For a close look at the *Nam mkha' che* texts see Christopher Wilkinson 2012.

For English Translations of the *Nam mkha' che lung*

see Keith Dowman 2013 p.47 and Namkhai Norbu & Adriano Clemente 1999.

2. The Cuckoo’s Song of Pure presence

Rig pa khu byug

Chapter 35, which evokes in barely disguised description the life and work of Sakyamuni buddha, the *Rig pa khu byug* is given as the essence of the ‘great tantras’ revealed on Vulture Peak in Rajgiri. *The Cuckoo’s Song*, also known as *The Six Vajra Verses*, is considered by some commentators to quintessentialize the Mind Series view:

*The nature of multiplicity is nondual
and things in themselves are pure and simple;
being here and now is thought-free
and it shines out in all forms, always all good;*

it is already perfect, so the striving sickness is avoided and spontaneity is constantly present.

English translations: Keith Dowman 2013 p.17.

Samten Karmay 1988 p.50.

John Reynolds, 1996 p.232 -3.

Namkhai Norbu and John Shane 1986 p.xv.

Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente 1989 p.48.

Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente 1999 p.174.

Tibetan sources: *Tshams brag rnying ma rgyud 'bum* Vol. Ka. p.113 3. (*Kun byed rgyal po* chap.31).

The *Mdo bcu* commentary is found in *Tshams brag rnying ma rgyud 'bum* Vol. Ka. pp.453.3 - 453.6.

3. The Embodiment, Compendium

Kun 'dus

The *Kun 'dus* is mentioned in chapter 35 in the same breath as the *Thig le kun gsal* and we must assume that it has the same importance. A *Dgongs pa kun 'dus* is included in the list of supreme tantras in chapter 75, which we assume to be the same scripture, but it is uncertain which text is referred to. It may be the *Kun 'dus* that is the contraction of *Sems sde Kun 'dus rig pa'i rgyud*, one of 'the thirteen later Mind Series tantras', which was translated by Vimalamitra, Nyag Jñanakumara, and Yudra Nyingpo. (*Dgongs pa kun 'dus* also refers to terma cycles, particularly the *Kun bzang dgongs pa kun 'dus*.)

4. The Child of Supreme Awareness

Ye shes bla ma'i bu

Mentioned in chapter 62 as a tantra in which 'the order of empowerment' is given, we have no other knowledge of this tantra.

Appendix 4: The Mantric Upadeshas

Below is a comprehensive list of all the mantric upadeshas (*man ngag*) that appear in the *Thig le kun gsal*, organized by chapter. The first listing is the literal version appearing in the *Mtsbams brag* text; the second is a partially reconstructed form.

Chapter 1 *This is the secret pith precept (upadesha) employed to ward off attack from the titanic anti-gods:*

A DHA KĀ RĀ BU DDHA DHA RMĀ PRA SA RA DU PA Ā PA YA Ā

AHAMKĀRĀ BUDDHA DHARMĀ PRASARAD UPĀ APAYA Ā

This is the secret pith precept, the single key that unlocks all treasures:

TANTRA SA DHU PRA SA RA KA LA

TANTRA SADU PRASARA KALA

Chapter 2

Ā Ā RATNA DHARMA KA YĀ

Ā Ā RATNA DHARMAKAYĀ

Chapter 6 *The crystal casket, unable to contain the turquoise mandala, the radiant light of the stupa shone outside as a secret pith precept shining as the five rainbow-goddesses:*

Ā BI TYA DZNYĀ NĀ PA NYTSA PRA SA RĀ KĀ LĀ DĀ DU Ā HĀ DĀ

ĀBITYA PRASARĀ KĀLĀ DĀ DU Ā HĀ DĀ

Chapter 8 *The secret pith precept asserting no difference between the sun and sunlight:*

BHA II SHAR RATNAKA LA PRA SAR DHUU DU

BHA II SHAR RATNA KALA PRASARA DHUUDU

Chapter 14

BADZRA A HAM RATNA DZNYĀ NA PANYTSA PRASARA A HUM TI

VAJRA AHAM RATNA JÑĀNA PAÑCHA PRASARA A HUM TI

Chapter 22

A PADZNYA DHARMA RATNA KĀ LA, OM DZNYĀ KA LA WA KA NI KU LA KĀ
YA BHA NYTSA HUM DHARMĀM PRA SA RA KĀ RU DZAH DHA TU A

A PRAJÑA DHARMA RATNA KĀLA, OM JÑĀ KALA VAKANI
KULA KĀYA PAÑCHA, HUM DHARMĀM PRASARA KĀRUJAH
DHATU A

Chapter 36 *Then this secret pith precept resounded thrice on the voice of the turquoise cuckoo,ⁱ the Teacher, from the top of a nine-storied jewel stupa:*

SVA BHA YA NA PRA SĀ RĀ DU PA YA

SVABHA YANA PRASĀRĀD UPAYA

Chapter 57 *The treasure-chest of nondual speech thrown open, a clear and bright lamp, a secret pith precept was revealed elucidating the meaning of 'king, minister and subjects' and dispelling darkness:*

TANTRA A NU U PA YA NA KA LAM SĀ DHA

TANTRA ANU UPAYA NA KALAM SĀDHA

Chapter 80

KRA GWADAD IRBA

Chapter 85

DZNYĀ NA TSITTA PRĀ BE SHAYA SĀ DU ĀTRAKĀ LADU

JÑĀNA CHITTA PRĀBE SHAYA SĀDU ĀTRA KĀLADU

ⁱ The cuckoo as buddha-teacher is the source of all tantra.

Incidence of Selected Technical Terms

<i>sku</i>	402	<i>rang rig</i> 43	
<i>chos sku</i> 131		<i>rdzogs</i>	150
<i>longs sku</i> 62		<i>rdzogs chen</i> 7	
<i>sprul sku</i> 71		<i>gzhi</i>	143
<i>sku gsum</i> 64		<i>'gag</i>	143
<i>sku lnga</i> 30		<i>'gags</i> 92	
<i>ye shes</i>	398	<i>ma 'gags</i> 69	
<i>snang</i>	390	<i>'gag(s) med</i> 12	
<i>snang ba</i> 173		<i>thugs</i>	134
<i>rang snang</i> 43		<i>thugs rje</i> 89	
<i>gzhi snang</i> 15		<i>thig le</i>	129
<i>gzhan snang</i> 14		<i>dag pa</i>	108
<i>gsal</i>	364	<i>sangs rgyas</i>	95
<i>gsal ba</i> 103		<i>shes rab</i>	86
<i>chen</i>	364	<i>dbyangs</i>	72
<i>chos</i>	315	<i>gdang</i>	65
<i>chos nyid</i> 109		<i>dangs</i> 11	
<i>chos sku</i> 105		<i>mdang</i> 5	
<i>rtog</i>	193	<i>rang thal</i>	52
<i>rtogs</i> 107		<i>stong</i>	47
<i>rtog pa</i> 28		<i>mi 'gyur</i>	35
<i>rtog med</i> 12			
<i>rig</i>	192	<i>'gyur med</i>	20
<i>rig pa</i> 115			

Glossary of Numeral Terms [GNT]

Appended question marks (?) indicate uncertain attribution

ONE

one sole holistic light-seed: the holistic seed of light: *thig le nyag cig*.

TWO

two accumulations, two provisions: *tshogs gnyis*: virtue - *bsod rnams* and present awareness - *ye shes*.

two benefits: *don gnyis*: benefit to oneself - *rang don*; benefit to others - *gzhan don*.

two existential dimensions: *sku gnyis*: *chos sku* - (dharmakaya) and *gzugs sku* (rupakaya), dimensions of formlessness and form.

two provisions: see 'two accumulations'.

two obscurations: see 'two veils'.

two stages: *rim gnyis*: creative (generation) - *skyed rim*; fulfillment (completion) - *rdzogs rim*.

two truths: *bden gnyis*: relative, conventional - *kun rdzob bden pa* and absolute - *don dam bden pa*.

two types of compassion: *thugs rje gnyis*: motivated and unmotivated; also, gnostic and relative, without and with an object (*rtog med dang ni rtog bcas*).

two veils: *sgrib gnyis*: afflictive emotion - *nyon mongs* and knowledge - *shes bya*.

twofold ignorance: *ma rig pa gnyis*: innate ignorance - *lhan cig skye pa'i ma rig pa*; conceptual ignorance - *kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig pa*.

twofold omniscience: *mkhyen pa gnyis*: knowledge of the ultimate nature of all things - *ji gnas lugs mkhyen pa*) and knowledge of the specifics of multiplicity - *ji snyed mkhyen pa*.

THREE

three aspects of perception: *snang ba gsum*: the grasped object - *gzung ba'i yul*; the subjective consciousness - *'dzin pa'i don*; and the active body - *'gro ba'i lus*.

three aspects of the primal ground: *kun gzhi nam pa gsum*: the primal ground as present awareness - *ye shes keyi kun gzhi*; primal ground as authenticity - *yang dag pa'i kun gzhi*; and the primal ground as the secret taste of diversity - *na tshogs ro gsang ba'i kun gzhi*.

- three buddha-bodies: *sku gsum*: see 'three existential dimensions'.
- three confirmations: *nges pa gsum*: the four introductory symbols that are unsurpassable metaphors; actual trikaya in neither union nor separation; the evidence of the lamp of present awareness.?
- three essences: *snying po gsum*: buddha body - *sku*, speech - *gsung* and mind - *thug*.
- three existential dimensions: *sku gsum* (trikaya): *chos sku* - dharmakaya; *longs spyod sku* - sambhogakaya; *sprul sku* - nirmanakaya.
- three families' mudras: *rigs gsum phyag rgya ldan pa*: the three families are vajra, sugata and padma, the buddhas of the families are called Akshobya, Vairochana and Amitabha, and their mudras are vajra, wheel and lotus.
- three groups: *phung po gsum*: buddha - *sangs rgyas*; bodhisattvas - *byang chub sems dpa'*; sentient beings - *sems can*.
- three hollows: *sbubs gsum*: jeweline hollow - *rin chen sbubs*; hollow of light - *'od kyi sbubs*; hollow of karmic propensity - *bag chags kyi sbubs*.
- three lineages of transmission: *brgyud gsum*: lineage of sublime buddha vision - *rgyal ba dgongs brgyud*; vidhyadhara's lineage of symbolic transmission - *rig 'dzin brda brgyud*; people's lineage of oral transmission - *gang zag snyan brgyud*.
- three mandalas: *dkyil 'khor gsum*: outer mandala - *gzhal yas khang 'gro ba 'dul ba'i dkyil 'khor*; inner mandala - *rang bzhin nam par dag pa'i dkyil 'khor*; secret mandala - *thugs rje rang byung gi dkyil 'khor*. See page 137.
- three media of desire: *'dod pa'i sgo gsum*: body - *lus*, speech - *ngag*, and mind - *yi*.
- three modes of creativity: *rtsal gsum*: appropriate creativity - *tshad 'dzin thun ba'i rtal*; enduring creativity - *ring bar bsgangs pa'i rtal*; expansive creativity - *bar snang du spar ba'i rtal*.? [From RY Dictionary.]
- three moments of release: 'the gathering hook', which secures us when the five-colored light fails to catch us; 'condensing distilled essence' as essential reality dissolves into the space of incipient present awareness; and 'the continuous thread of eternal music'.?
- three symbolic ritual substances: *phyi nang rdzas gsum*: ashes - *thal chen* (bala), blood - *rakta*; and semen - *byang sems* (bodhichitta).
- three poisons: *dug gsum*: - anger - *zhe sdang*, desire - *'dod chags* - and ignorance - *ma rig pa*.
- three purities (in kriya-yoga): *dag pa nam gsum*: pure deity and mandala - *lha dang dkyil 'khor dag pa*; substances and enjoyment - *rdzas*

dang long spyod dag pa; mantra and samadhi - *sngags dang ting 'dzin dag pa*.

three samadhis: *ting nge 'dzin rnam par gsum*: 'just like that' samadhi - *de bzhin nyid keyi ting nge 'dzin*; goal oriented samadhi - *rgyu'i ting nge 'dzin*; universally illuminating samadhi - *kun tu snang ba'i ting nge 'dzin*.

three skies: *nam mkha' gsum*: outer, inner and secret skies.

three streams: *chu bo gsum*: natural perfection - *gnas lugs*; delusion - *'kehrul lugs*; delusion reverted - *'kehrul ba ldog pa*.

three testaments: *zhal chems rnam par gsum*: Hinayana, Mahayana and Tantrayana.?

three thrones: *gdan gsum*: the aggregates - *phung po* (skandhas); sense fields - *kham*s (dhatus); and sense faculties - *skye mched* (ayatanas). [From the *Tshig mdzod chen mo*]: The five body-mind aggregates - *phungs po lnga* (skandhas) and sense fields - *kham*s (dhatus) are the thrones of male and female tathagatas respectively; the sense faculties - *skye mched* (ayatanas) are the thrones of male and female bodhisattvas; and the subsidiary thrones of the male and female protectors may be selfless action - *'phrin las* (karma) and sense organs (powers) - *dbang po* (indriyas) respectively.

three types of mantra: *gsang sngags* for enlightenment, *rig sngags* for magical transformation and *gzungs sngags* for retentive memory: see chapter 62.

three worlds: *kham*s *gsum*: desire realm - *'dod pa'i kham*s (kamadhatu); form realm - *gzugs kham*s (rupadhatu); and formless realm - *gzugs med keyi kham*s (arupadhatu). Also the three worlds: the sky, the earth and the subterranean worlds.

threefold tantric essence: *rgyud keyi snying po gsum*: empty essence - *ngo bo [snying po]*; clear nature - *rang bzhin*; compassionate expression - *thugs rje*.

threefold underlying structure: *bod* (or 'bod) *skad thengs gsum*.

trikaya: *sku gsum*: see 'three existential dimensions'.

FOUR

four aspects of confidence: *gdeng chen bzhi*: no fear of worse rebirth, no hope for better rebirth, no hope for buddhahood, equanimity in hopelessness.

four alternatives: *mu bzhi*: the four logical possibilities or alternatives or conceptual extremes, defined by the tetralemma: refutation of positive, negative, both, and neither. See chapter 94.

- four bardos: *bar do bzhi*: naturally pure bardo (bardo of life) - *rang bzhin dag gi bar do*; the bardo of samadhi - *ting nge 'dzin gyi bar do*; the bardo of the clear light of reality - *chos nyid 'od gsal bar do*; and the bardo of becoming - *srid pa bar do*.
- four boundless qualities: *tshad med bzhi*: loving kindness - *byams pa*; compassion, *thugs rje*; sympathetic joy - *dga' ba*, equanimity - *btang snyoms*.
- four conceptual (dualistic) extremes: *rtag chad mtha' bzhi* of eternity (*rtag*) and nothingness (*chad*), both and neither.
- four connections: *sbyor ba bzhi*: complete manifest connection with all aspects - *rnam kun mngon rdzogs sbyor ba*; apex connection - *rtse mo'i sbyor ba*; graduated connection - *mthar gyis pa'i sbyor ba*; instantaneous connection - *skad cig ma'i sbyor ba*?
- four continents: *gling bzhi*: Purvavideha - *Lus 'phags pa*; Jambudvīpa - *'Dzam bu gling*; Aparagodaniya - *Ba lang spyod*; and Uttarakuru - *Sgra mi snyan po*.
- four degrees [of union with deity]: 'approach' - *bsnyen pa*, close approach - *nye bsnyen pa*, accomplishment - *bsgrub pa*, great accomplishment - *bsgrub pa chen*. See chapter 70.
- four demons: *bdud bzhi* (chaturmara): 'son of god' (demon of divine pride) - *lha sras bdud*; demon of embodiment - *phung po'i bdud*; demon of afflictive emotion - *nyon mongs pa'i bdud*; the demonic lord of death - *chi'i bdag po'i bdud*.
- four deportments: *spyod lam nam bzhi*: sitting, walking, sleeping, waking.
- four female qualities: *shes rab mkeha' la 'deg pa / mtshan nyid nam par bzhi*: powerful dakini - *stobs ldan ma*; inspiring dakini - *shugs 'chang ma*; uplifting dakini - *'deg byed ma* and steadfast dakini - *brtan ma*. See chapter 91.
- four empowerments: *dbang bzhi*: vase empowerment - *bum dbang*; wisdom empowerment - *shes rab dbang*; secret empowerment - *gsang dbang*; word empowerment - *tshig dbang*.
- four experiences that interrupt discursive dualistic elaboration: *spros pa chod pa'i chos bzhi*? The *cog bzhab bzhi* perhaps.
- four external symbols of empowerment: *dbang rdzas bzhi*: see 'four introductory symbols'
- four great elements: *'byung ba bzhi*: earth - *sa*, water - *chu*, fire - *me*, air - *rlung*.
- four introductory symbols: *ngo sprod brda' bzhi*: Vajrasattva's mirror - *rdo rje sems dpa'i me long*, a mirror-image ('dra 'bag), the eyeball - *'od khyim kha sbyar*, and the sun - *nyi ma*. See chapter 86.
- four kinds of robes: *cha lugs nam bzhi*: robes of monks, nuns, yogins and yoginis.

- four misconceptions: *phyin ci log bzhi*: assumptions that the deluded experiences of samsara are permanent - *rtag*, true - *bden*, pleasant - *bde ba*, and concrete - *mtshan ma*.
- four modes of birth: *chags lugs rnam pa bzhi*: *skye bzhi*: moisture birth, egg birth, womb birth, miraculous birth.
- four mudras: *phyag rgya bzhi*: samayamudra - *dam tshig gyi phyag rgya*; dharmamudra - *chos keyi phyag rgya*; karmamudra - *las keyi phyag rgya*, mahamudra - *phyag rgya chen po*. See chap. 69.
- four noble truths: *'phags pa bden bzhi*: the noble truths of suffering - *sdug bsngal*, the cause of suffering - *kun 'byung*, release from suffering - *'gog pa*, and the path of release - *grol lam*.
- four pairs of noble beings: *skyes bu zung bzhi*: stream-winner - *rgyun zhugs*; once-returner - *phyir 'ong*; never-returner - *phyir mi 'ong*; enemy-destroyer - *dgra bcom* (arhat)) on the shravaka and pratyekabuddha paths.
- four pairs of superior beings on the path of arhatship: *zung bzhi ya brgyad*: see 'four pairs of noble beings'.
- four samaya commitments: *dam tshig bzhi*: absence - *med pa*; openness - *phyal ba*; unity - *gcig pa*; spontaneity - *lhun grub*.
- four selfless activities: *'phrin las rnam par bzhi*: pacification - *zhi*; enrichment - *rgyas*; control - *dbang*; destruction - *drag*.
- four socially magnetizing activities: *bsdud ba bzhi*: offering gifts - *shyin pa byin pa*; making pleasing speech - *snyan pa smra ba*; providing appropriate teaching - *don mthun pa*; and remaining consistent in words and deeds - *don spyod pa*.
- four special ritual objects: *dbang rdzas bzhi*: see 'four introductory symbols'.
- four stages of meditative absorption: conceptual thought - *rtog pa*; examining thought - *dpyod pa*; joy - *dga' ba*; and intensive, soft focus (one-pointed soft focus) - *rtse gcig*. See also 'five stages of meditative absorption'.
- four streams of empowerment: *dbang gi chu bo bzhi*: the outer stream of tantra, the inner stream of mastery, the ritual practice stream of renown, and the secret stream of perfection. [See RY Dictionary]
- four symbolic attributes: *don gyi mtshan nyid rnam par bzhi*: see 'four introductory symbols'.
- four visions: *snang ba bzhi*: The four categories of visionary experience: direct experience of reality - *chos nyid mngon sum*; increasing visionary experience - *snang nyams 'phel ba*; full scope of pure presence - *rig pa tshad 'phebs*; reality consummate - *chos nyid blo zad* or *chos zad* - intellect spent, all experience consummate.

- fourfold mindfulness samadhi: *dran pa bzhi yi ting nge 'dzin*: fixation of mindfulness of body - *nye bar bzbag pa lus dran pa*; mindfulness of feelings - *tshor ba dran pa*; mindfulness of mind - *sems dran pa*; mindfulness of reality - *chos dran pa*.
- fourfold pointing out: *ngo sprod bzhi*: of dharmakaya's jeweline hollow - *chos sku rin po che'i shubs*; of fivefold sambhogakaya - *longs sku lnga ldan*; of the nirmanakaya bardo - *sprul sku bar do*; and of trikaya - *sku gsum 'du 'bral med pa rdzogs ldan*. See chapter 86.
- fourfold recollection, samadhi of: *dran pa bzhi'i ting nge 'dzin*: one-pointed recollection - *rtse gcig gi dran pa*; manifest recollection - *mngon par dran pa*; absence of recollection in the universal ground - *kun gzhi yi dran pa dang bral ba*; self-illuminating recollection of the universal ground - *kun gzhi rnam par shes pa'i dran pa rang gsal*.

FIVE

- five afflictive emotions: *nyon rmongs lnga* (panchaklesha): five poisons: stupidity - *gti mug*; desire - *'dod chags*; anger - *khong khro*; pride - *nga rgyal*; jealousy - *phrag dog*.
- five aggregates: *phung po lnga*: see 'five body-mind aggregates'.
- five aspects of awareness: *ye shes lnga*: see 'fivefold present awareness'.
- five bodhisattva children: *byang chub sems dpa' lnga*: see the five consciousnesses.
- five body-mind aggregates, also five aggregates: *phung po lnga*: form and name - *ming dang gzugs* (rupaskandha); sensation - *tshor ba*; concept - *'du 'shes*; volition - *'du byed* (samskara-skandha); consciousness - *rnam shes*.
- five characteristics of pure presence: *rig pa'i mtshan nyid lnga*: emptiness of dharmakaya - *chos sku stong pa*; intangibility - *'gag pa med pa*; indivisibility - *de nyid dbyer med pa*; uncrystallizing wisdom that knows itself as such - *de ltar shes pa'i shes rab mi 'gag pa*; freedom from obstacles - *de la thogs pa med pa*.
- five colored lights *'od lnga*: white - *dkar*, blue - *mthing*; yellow - *gser*, red - *dmag*, green - *ljang*.
- five conduits, doorways, of compassion: *thugs rje'i sgo lnga*: eyes, ears, mouth, nose and body.
- five consciousnesses: *rnam shes lnga*: consciousnesses of eye, ear, tongue, nose and body, comprising the fifth skandha.
- five creative modes of present awareness: *ye shes rtsal snang lnga*: see 'fivefold present awareness'.
- five doorways: conduits: *sgo lnga*: see 'five senses'.

- five great elements: *'byung ba lnga*: earth - *sa*; water - *chu*; fire - *me*; air - *rlung*; space - *nam mkha'*.
- five excellences: *phun sum tshogs pa lnga*: Teacher - *ston pa*; teaching - *bstan pa*; retinue - *rgyud*, time - *dus*; place - *gnas*. See Chapter 58.
- five families: *rigs lnga*: buddha - *sang rgyas*, vajra - *rdo rje*, karma - *'phrin las*, padma - *pad ma*; and ratna - *rin chen*.
- five greats: *chen po lnga*: see 'fivefold present awareness'.
- five impurities: *dri ma lnga*: perhaps 'five afflictive emotions'.
- five lamps: *sgron ma lnga*: see 'five-colored light'.
- five offerings, five kinds of nirmanakaya offering: *mchod pa lnga*: see 'five sensory objects'.
- five paths to enlightenment: *byang chub lam lnga*: paths of accumulation - *tshogs lam*; preparation - *sbyor lam*; seeing (insight) - *mtshong lam*; purification - *yongs byang lam*; release - *sgrol lam*.
- five poisons: *dug lnga*: see 'five afflictive emotions'.
- five principles of agama instruction: the principles of trust in the instruction, unchanging sky-transmission, uncorrupted instruction, credible instruction, harmonious instruction. See chapter 71.
- five seed syllables of the five male consorts: *rin chen yi yi ge lnga*: OM AH HUNG HRI TRAM
- five sense organs: skt. indriyas: *dbang po lnga* (see also five powers): eye - *mig*, ear - *rma ba*, nose - *sna*, body - *lus*, tongue - *lce*.
- five senses, five doorways: *sgo lnga*: senses of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body.
- five sensory objects, five objective sensory fields: *yul lnga*: sights, sounds, aromas, flavors and textures.
- five stages of meditative absorption (dhyana): *bsam gtan yan lags lnga*: conceptual thought - *rtog pa*; examining thought - *dp'byod pa*; joy - *dga' ba*; ease - *sla ba*; intensive soft focus - *rtse mo gcig*.
- five sublime forms: *sku lnga*: Universally Manifesting Present Awareness - *Rnam snang* (also *kun snang ye shes*); Unshakeable - *Mi bskyod pa*; Great Jewel Source - *Rin 'byung chen po*; Boundless Light - *'Od dpag med*; Great All Accomplisher - *Don grub chen po*. See 'fivefold present awareness'.
- five supremacies: *'phags pa'i che ba lnga*: see 'fivefold supremacy'.
- five thrones: *gdan lnga*: lion throne - *seng ge'i gdan*; elephant throne - *glang chen gdan*; horse throne - *rta mchog gdan*; peacock throne - *rma bya gdan*; garuda throne - *mkha' lding thogs med gdan*.
- five vital energies: *rlung lnga*: upward moving - *gyen rgyu*; all-suffusing - *khyab byed*; thermal - *me mnyam*; downward moving - *thur sel*; and life-sustaining - *srog 'dzin*.
- fivefold awareness: *ye shes lnga*: see 'fivefold present awareness'.

- fivefold mandala group: *tshom bu lnga*: the five mandalas of the five sublime forms in yabyum with attendant male and female bodhisattvas; the third togal vision (see 'four visions'). See Appendix 1.
- fivefold present awareness: fivefold awareness: *ye shes lnga*: awareness of spaciousness - *chos dbyings keyi ye shes*; mirrorlike awareness - *me long gi ye shes*; awareness of sameness - *mnyam nyid keyi ye shes*; discriminating awareness - *sor rtogs keyi ye shes*; all-accomplishing awareness - *bya grub gyi ye shes*. See chapters 6 and 7.
- fivefold sublime form: see 'five sublime forms'.
- fivefold supremacy, five supremacies: *'phags pa'i che ba lnga*: the supremacy of buddha manifest - *mngon par sangs rgyas che ba*; the supremacy of buddha as spaciousness - *chos dbyings sangs rgyas che ba*; the supremacy of buddha as essential identity - *bdag nyid sangs rgyas che ba*; the supremacy of the very buddha itself - *de nyid sangs rgyas yin pas che ba*; the supremacy of all-buddha - *thams cad sangs rgyas che ba*. See chapter 54.

SIX

- six direct intuitions (extrasensory perceptions): *mngon shes drug*: of the divine ear - *snyan gyi mngon par shes pa (lha'i rna ba'i)*; of the dharma eye - *chos keyi spyan gyi mngon par shes pa (lha'i mig)*; of buddha mind - *thugs keyi mngon par shes pa*; of karma - *las keyi mngon par shes pa*; of the 'place' of trikaya - *gnas keyi mngon par shes pa (skye gnas)*; of compassionate blessing - *thugs rje'i byin rlabs keyi mngon par shes pa*.
- six eyes: *spyen drug*: soft-focussed eye of present awareness - *ye shes keyi spyen*; unthought dharma eye, eye of reality - *chos keyi spyen*; discriminating wisdom eye - *shes rab keyi spyen*; empty and pure divine eye - *lha'i spyen*; samadhi-inducing fleshly eye - *sha'i spyen*; ordinary 'water bubble' eyes - *chu bur gyi mig*.
- six fields of consciousness: *tshogs drug*: consciousness-aggregates of eye, ear, body, tongue, nose, and mind.
- six kinds of wandering mind: *'gro ba rnam pa drug*: gods - *lha*, titans (anti-gods) - *lha ma yin*, human beings - *mi*, animals - *dud 'gro*, hungry ghosts - *yi dvags*, and hell beings - *dmial ba*.
- six realms: *gnas drug*: the heavens, the titanic realm, the earth, the jungle of the animals, the desert of the hungry ghosts and the hell realms.
- six recollections: *rjes dran drug*: recollection of the yidam deity - *lha rjes dran*; of the path - *lam*; of the place of birth - *skye gnas*; of the meditative state - *bsam gtan*; of the buddha-teacher's oral

instruction - *bla ma'i man ngag*; and of the view - *lta ba*. Also: recollection of place of death - *'chi ba rjes dran*; recollection of what to abandon - *gtong ba rjes dran*; recollection of the bardo - *bar do rjes dran*; and recollection of the bardo of reality - *chos nyid rjes dran*.

six seminal syllables: *ji ge drug pa*: Á A HA SHA SA MA. See chapter 88.

six siddhamunis: *ngos grub thub pa drug*: *Dbang po brgya byin* (Indra) of the gods, *Thags bzang ris* (Vemachitra) of the antigods, *Sha keya thub pa* (Sakyamuni) of the humans, *Seng ge rab brtan* (Singha?) of the animals, *Kha 'bar de ba* (Jwalamukha) of the hungry ghosts, and *Chos keyi rgyal po* (Dharmaraja) of the hell beings. [From Thrinley Norbu, *The Small Golden Key*.]

six sublime forms: *sku drug*, see *thub drug*: the six munis, siddhas, magi: buddha manifest in the six realms. See 'six siddhamunis'.

SEVEN

seven gems: *rin chen bdun*: ruby, sapphire, lapis, emerald, diamond, pearl and coral (with variations).

seven precious royal emblems: *rgyal srid rin po che sna bdun*: the seven attributes of kingship or of a universal monarch, the seven royal emblems: thousand-spoked wheel - *rtsibs stong 'khor lo*; wish fulfilling gem - *yid bzhin nor bu*; queen - *btsun mo*; minister - *blon po* or judge - *kehrims bdag*; elephant - *glang po che*; horse - *rita mchog*; general - *dmag dpon*.

seven successive buddhas: *sangs rgyas rabs bdun*: *Rnam par gzig* (Vipashvi); *Gtsug tor can* (Shikhi); *Thams cad skyob* (Vishvabhu); *Khor ba 'jig* (Krakuchanda); *Gser thub* (Kanakamuni); *'Od srungs* (Kasyapa); *Shakya thub pa* (Sakyamuni).

EIGHT

eight approaches: eight lower approaches: *theg pa brgyad*: the approaches of the auditors (shravakas) - *snyan thos*; hermits (pratyekabuddhas) - *rang sang rgyas*; bodhisattvas - *byang chub sems dpa'*; and of kriya-tantra, upa-tantra and yoga-tantra; and mahayoga and anuyoga.

eight bodhisattvas (male): *sems dpa' brgyad*: Samantabhadra, *Kun tu bzang po* (Kuntuzangpo), All-good; Akashagarbha, *Nam mkha'i snying po* (Namkhai Nyingpo), Space-Essence; Manjushri, *Jam dpal* (Jampel), Tender Glory; Vajrapani, *Phyag na rdo rje* (Chaknadorje), Vajra-in-Hand; Sarvanivarana-viskambhin, *Sgrib pa rnam sel* (Dripanamsel), Cloud Dissolver; Avalokiteshvara, *Spyan ras gzig* (Chenrezik), Tearful Gaze; Kshitigarbha, *Sa'i*

- snying po* (Sainyingpo), Earth-Essence; Maitreya, *Byams pa* (Jampa), Loving Kindness.
- eight bodhisattva (female): *sems ma brgyad*: Lasya, *Sgeg mo ma* (Gekma), Charm; Pushpa, *Me tog ma* (Metokma), Flower; Gita, *Glu ma* (Luma), Song; Aloka, *Mar me* (Marme), Lamp; Nritya, *Gar ma* (Garma), Dance; Gandha, *Dri chab ma* (Drichabma), Taste; Mala, *Phreng ba* (Tengwa), Garland.
- eight conceptual elements: *don brgyad*: birth, cessation, permanence, impermanence, eight conceptual components (birth and cessation (*skyed 'gag*), eternity and nothingness (*rtag chad*), coming and going (*'ong 'gro*) oneness and multiplicity (*gcig du ba*). [For the second four, alternatively: being and non-being (*yod med*), appearances and emptiness (*snang stong*).]
- eight fields of consciousness: *tshogs brgyad*: consciousness-aggregates of eye, ear, skin, tongue, nose, thought, emotion and 'store consciousness'.
- eight metaphors of maya: *sgyu ma'i dpe brgyad*: *bag chags dang 'dres pa'i shes pa brgyad*: magical illusion - *sgyu ma*; reflection of the moon in water - *chu zla*; optical illusion - *mig yor*; mirage - *smig rgyu*; dream - *rmi lam*; echo - *sgra bsnyan*; gandharva city - *dri za'i grong khyer*; apparition - *mig 'phrul*.
- eight subcontinents: *gling phran brgyad* (pairs of subcontinents flanking each of the four continents): Deha and Videha, Chamara and Upachamara, Shatha and Uttara Mantrina, Kurava and Kaurava; *Lus dang Lus 'phags*, *Rnga yab dang Rnga yab zhan*, *G.yo ldan dang Lam mchog 'dro*, *Sgra mi snyan dang Sgra mi snyan gyi zla*).

NINE

- nine approaches: *theg pa dgu*: the 'eight approaches' plus atiyoga.
- nine samadhis of the *Tiklay Kunsek*: the samadhi of all-inclusive envisionment - *gzhi snang ba chen po'i ting nge 'dzin*; the samadhi that is characteristic of the primal ground - *gzhi mtshan nyid keyi ting nge 'dzin*; the samadhi of clear present awareness - *rdo rje sems dpa' ye shes gsal ba'i ting nge 'dzin*; the sublime vision of compassionate creativity - *thugs rje rtsal gyi dgongs pa*; the samadhi of ornamentation and display - *rgyan dang rol pa'i ting nge 'dzin*; the samadhi of structured perception - *snang ba rnam par bkod pa'i ting nge 'dzin*; the samadhi of the sublime vision of compassion-emanating trikaya - *thugs rje 'byung ba'i sku gsum gyi dgongs pa'i ting nge 'dzin*; the samadhi of inconceivable revelation - *de mtshon pa bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i ting nge 'dzin*; the samadhi of the paramount secret - *gsang ba bla na med pa'i ting nge 'dzin*.

TEN

ten perfections: *pha rol tu phyin pa bcu*, (dasaparamita), 'the ten gone to the far side', 'consummations'. To the six perfections of the Prajnaparamita-yana (generosity - *sbyin pa*; morality - *tshul khrims*; patience - *bxod pa*; perseverance - *brtson 'grus*; meditative absorption - *bsam gtan*; wisdom - *shes rab*) are added in Vajrayana four more (skillful means - *thabs* (upaya); aspiration - *smon lam* (pranidhana); strength - *stobs* (bala); and present awareness - *ye shes* (jnana).

ten requisites of a tantra: *rgyud keyi ldang tshad rnam pa bcu*: empowerment and samaya - *dbang* and *dam tshig*; mandala and selfless activity - *dkeyil 'khor rnam gnyis* (*dkeyil 'khor dang 'phrin las*); offering and yoga - *mchod* and *rnal byor*; mantra and mudra - *gsang sngags* and *phyag rgya*; approach and accomplishment - *bsnyen* and *sgrub pa*. Compare with Longchenpa: view, samaya commitment, empowerment, mandala, levels, paths, selfless activity, present awareness, goal and reality.

ten stages of the bodhisattva path: *sa bcu*: The Joyous - *rab tu dga' ba*; The Stainless - *Dri ma med pa*; The Radiant - *'Od byed pa*; The Brilliant - *'Od 'phro ba can*; The Hard to Purify - *Shin tu sbyangs dka' ba*; The Realized - *Mngon du gyur ba*; The Far Reaching - *Ring du song ba*; The Unshakable - *Mi g.yo ba*; Good Intelligence - *Legs pa'i blo gros*; and The Cloud of Dharma - *chos keyi sprin*.

ten virtues: *dge ba bcu*: forsaking killing, theft, sexual misconduct, lying, cursing, gossip, slander, opionatedness, covetousness and malice.

TWELVE

twelve downfalls: *lhung pa bcu gnyis*.

twelve factors of calm-abiding meditation: *zhi gnas yan lag bcu gnyis*: relating to twelve stages in the pacification of elephant and monkey mind in shamatha meditation.

twelve links of interdependant origination: *nten brel bcu gnyis*: ignorance - *ma rig pa*; volition - *'du byed*; consciousness - *rnam par shes pa*; name and form - *ming dang gzugs*; six sense faculties - *skye mched drug*; contact - *reg pa*; sensation - *tshor ba*; craving - *sred pa*; grasping - *nye bar len pa*; becoming - *srid pa*; birth - *skye ba*; old age and death - *rga zhi*.

FIFTEEN

fifteen stages: *sa bcu lnga*: the first stage 'The Stage of Rejoicing' - *rab tu dga' ba'i sa*; the second stage, 'The Stage of Immaculate Purity' - *dri ma med pa'i sa*; the third stage 'The Radiant,' - *'od 'phro ba*; the fourth stage, 'The Brilliant' - *'od byed*; the fifth stage, the five poisons and the three poisons immaculate - *dug lnga dug gsum ngang du dag*; the sixth stage, the three hollows are recognized - *sbubs gsum skabs kyi sku gsum gsak*; the seventh stage, the purposes of the eight lesser approaches are surpassed - *theg brgyad don las rab tu 'phags*; the eighth stage, unwavering intuition of the reality of intrinsic presence - *rang rig don las ma g'gyos mkhyen*; the ninth stage, all qualities are known as perfect in themselves - *chos rnams gang la thogs med mkhyen*; the tenth stage, intuitive wisdom suffuses all experiences whatsoever - *chos rnams gang la thogs med mkhyen*; the eleventh, 'Universal Light' - *kun tu 'od*; the twelfth stage, - 'The Lotus Stage' - *padma can gyi sa*; the thirteenth stage, 'The Great Assembly: The Circle of Seminal Syllables' - *yi ge 'khor lo tshogs che*; the fourteenth stage, Vajradhara - *Rdo rje 'dzin pa*; the fifteenth stage, *Nirvana*: the trikaya spirals into the matrix of the jeweline hollow - *rin chen sbubs su sku gsum kelong du 'khyil*.

TWENTIES

twenty ways in which the buddha body is enlightened: *nam pa nyi shu byang chub pa*. [According to Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, this refers to the ten aspects of renunciation and the ten aspects of realization which relate to the ten bodhisattva levels. The term may also refer in Madhyamaka to the fourfold view of self (*bdag lta bzhi*), which applies to each of the five components of form, feeling, perception, habitual tendencies, and consciousness. In the context of the vehicles of secret mantra, it may refer to accomplishment in twenty specific exercises pertaining to the experiential cultivation of the energy channels, currents and seminal points within the body. See Dudjom Rinpoche 1991 pp.177, 416.]

THIRTIES

thirty-six deviations and obscurations: *gol grib sum cu rtsa drug*: of the sutra-yanas.

thirty-seven factors of enlightenment: *chos sum cu rtsa bdun*: 37 bodhi-factors: Four Essential Recollections: *dran pa nyer bzbag bzhi*; of body - *lus dran pa nyer gzbag*; of feeling - *tshor ba dran pa nyer gzbag*; of mind - *sems dran pa nyer gzbag*; and of dharma - *chos dran pa nyer gzbag*. Four Correct Exertions: *yang dag spong ba bzhi*: to avoid giving rise to nonvirtuous qualities, to abandon the ones that have arisen, to give rise to virtuous qualities, and to avoid letting the ones that have arisen degenerate. Four Legs of Miraculous Emanation: *rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa bzhi*: samadhi of aspiration - *'dun pa'i ting nge 'dzin*; mental samadhi - *sems keyi ting nge 'dzin*; samadhi of perseverance - *brtson grus keyi ting nge 'dzin*; samadhi of scrutiny - *dp'od pa'i ting nge 'dzin*. Five Powers: *dbang po lnga*: faith - *dad pa*; perseverance - *brtson 'grus*; mindfulness - *dran pa*; samadhi - *ting nge 'dzin*; wisdom - *shes rab*. Five Strengths: *stobs lnga*: faith - *dad pa*, perseverance - *brtson 'grus*, mindfulness - *dran pa*, samadhi - *ting nge 'dzin*, wisdom - *shes rab*. Seven Factors of Enlightenment: *byang chub keyi yan lag bdun*: genuine mindfulness - *dran pa yang dag*, pure enlightenment - *chos rab tu rnam 'byed*; genuine perseverance - *brtson 'grus yang dag*, genuine gladness - *dga' ba yang dag*, pure ecstasy - *shin tu sbyangs pa yang dag*, samadhi - *ting nge 'dzin*, equanimity - *btang snyoms*. The Noble Eightfold Path: *'phags lam gyi yan lag brgyad*.

FORTIES

forty-two buddha deities: *zhi bo bzhi bcu rtsa gnyis*. See Appendix 1.

FIFTIES

fifty-eight wrathful deities: *khro bo lnga bcu rtsa brgyad*: Krodhas / Herukas: Buddha, Vajra, Ratna, Padma, and Karma Herukas; the Herukas' respective Krodhishvaris [10]; eight Mataris or Gauris [8]; eight Pishachis [8]; twenty eight Ishvaris [28]; and four female gatekeepers [4].

SIXTIES

sixty qualities of melodious speech: *gsung dbyangs yan lag drug cu*: In tantra, six metaphors describe sweet speech: the voice of Brahma, cymbals, song, the kalapinga birdsong, thunder and sitar. Each of those has ten qualities of understanding: capacity, comprehension, respect worthiness, freedom from discord, profundity, acceptability, invincibility, pleasure in hearing, clarity, and distinction.

Glossary of English Dzogchen Technical Terms

alpha-pure, alpha-purity: *ka dag*: [primordially pure].

alternatives, four: *mu bzhi*: see chapter 94.

appearances: *snang ba*: appearance, perception, vision, visionary experience, all translate the same Tibetan word. As a verb the same word can be translated as 'to shine'. 'Appearances' relate to the objective aspect of perception, inner or outer or in between, but the word happily connotes a sense of illusion and evanescence. 'Vision' on the other hand, as a function of the eye, is primarily related to the subjective aspect and only secondarily does it become a projection 'out there'. So long as dualistic perception pertains, the 'vision' is an 'appearance', but when the distinction between subject and object is obviated, self-envisionment dawns, and vision is nondual.

authentic cognition: *ma nor shes pa*.

authentic: *gshis*: uncontrived, spontaneously present, nonconceptual.

authentic: *yang dag par*: literally 'most pure'; also ultimate or nondual.

awareness of presence: *rig pa'i ye shes*: As awareness of presence, present awareness (*ye shes*) exists as our own intrinsic presence (*rang rig*) (chapter 6).

awareness of the now: *ye shes*: The prefix *ye* elevates perception (*shes pa*) into an ineffable, inexpressible, nondual space, which conventionally has been translated as 'primordial'. 'Primordial' evokes the beginning of time on earth, which is a mistaken connotation of *yeshe*. *Yeshe* has also been understood as 'timeless', which is better than 'primordial', but tends to abstract awareness from 'the here and now'. 'The now' is right here-and-now and brings us back to nondual experience of the moment.

'*Yeshe*' is nondual awareness of the now, not discursive 'wisdom': The egregious error that demoted the yogin's nondual perception was spread by lamas semi literate in English in the early days of propagation of Vajrayana in the English language – perhaps it is too late to rectify that mistake. 'Wisdom' in every English dictionary (as well as in common usage) is defined as a discursive quality. If indeed a nondiscursive aspect to wisdom exists, it is inseparable from its discursive expression. Even the wise old owl ('idiot' in Hindi) expresses wisdom verbally.

In Sanskrit the classical equivalent of 'yeshe' is 'jnana', but jnana in Hindi is understood as discursive wisdom, which perhaps is why Tibetans translate *ye shes* as wisdom. However, see 'wisdom' below). See also 'present awareness' as another translation of *ye shes*.

bodhisattva children: *sems dpa' khye'u*. The anthropomorphic representations of sensory consciousnesses galvanized by apparitional offerings is thus united indissolubly with present awareness. All moments of sensory consciousness, a stream of awareness, are nondual experience of the magical nirmanakaya mandala, dressing transparent (naked) present awareness with the colorings of the objective sensory field.

brilliance: *mdangs*: or 'brightness', 'efflorescence', 'an exuberant radiance'.

buddha, *sang rgyas*: The danger of reification of personified buddha in anthropomorphic imagery, found particularly in the lesser buddhist approaches, serves a didactic purpose in devotional, suppositional Buddhism, but in Dzogchen it obscures the impersonal, nondual reality. Both definite and indefinite articles and capitalization (except where an anthropomorphic entity is indicated) of it have been rejected herein. 'Buddha' has no characteristic, no person, no specific attributes. 'Simple recognition of the nature of being is labeled "buddha"' (Keith Dowman 1013, *Spaciousness*, Canto 10, verse 20).

buddha body, speech and mind: *sku gsung thug*: The difference between ordinary body speech and mind (*lus ngag yid*) and honorific (buddha-) body, speech and mind (*sku gsung thug*) is the difference between apperceptive analytic thought and direct perception in the now.

buddhafields: *zhing khams*: see 'sublimation'.

buddhahood: *sang rgyas pa*: In the lesser, suppositional, approaches, buddhahood is the goal. No goal exists in Dzogchen separate from the now. 'Buddha' is a dynamic state of awareness (see above), not a role or a destination.

clarity: *gsal ba*: Clarity is an extremely important word in this tantra, the second of the dharmakaya triad (essence, nature and expression). As a close synonym of clear light (*'od gsal*) clarity should not to be confused with 'radiance', which describes the manifest light of sambhogakaya.

compassion: *thugs rje*: see 'gnostic compassion' below.

conceptual extremes, four: *mtha' bzhi*: see 'four conceptual extremes'.

convert, conversion: *'dul bya*: In the basic buddhist creed where our purpose is said to be 'to tame' or 'to discipline' the mind, the

verb employed is 'dul ba. 'Dul bya refers to who or what is tamed, 'the relative mind'. In Dzogchen, the verb 'dul ba is still employed but the meaning is 'to tame' the mind by recognizing its nature, not to reduce its vibrancy or change its form. In chapter 22, conversion in sambhogakaya is recognition of the nature of the five elements as the five lights and their corresponding five aspects of present awareness.

creative expression: *rtsak* see 'creativity'.

creativity fully potentiated: *rtsal rdzogs*: present awareness suffusing creative expression empowering, completing and resolving it.

creativity, creative expression: *rtsal*, *rig rtsak*: Pure presence is quiescent, but it can be active, and its activity is called its *rtsal*, its creativity. That dynamic does not actually crystalize, or reify, it remains more as creative potential than creative expression. Whatever is moved and expressed by the energy of present awareness becomes the five lights and the five elements. Such creativity is recognized either as pure presence in which case we remain in the immanent nirvana, or it is objectified, in which case we wander in samsara. *The rig pa'i rtsal dbang*, the empowerment of creative pure presence may provide recognition of the creativity, but actually recognition is a quality of spontaneity, and in that synchronic mode it is said to be 'potentiated'. In whatever way it is achieved, it occurs as radiance (*gdangs*). See chapter 9 for 'internal' and 'external' creativity. See 'potentiation' and 'potentiate' below.

dimension of enjoyment: sambhogakaya.

direct intuition: *mngon shes*: supersensory consciousness, clairvoyance. See 'sixfold direct intuition'.

discursive thought: *rnam rtog*. As a rule of thumb *rnam rtog* can be translated as (conflicting- confused-) discursive thought or 'discursive elaboration', *rtog pa* as 'mental constructs' or 'conceptual thought', and *rtogs pa* as 'realization' as in the triad 'understanding' (*go ba*), 'knowing' (*shes pa*) and 'realization' (*rtogs pa*). Dependent upon this simplistic definition it would appear impossible to confuse conceptual thought (*rtog pa*) with preverbal (or post-verbal) realization or direct perception (*rtogs pa*). But the confusion arises frequently enough in block-printed texts to indicate that the distinction in the minds of block carvers is blurred to say the least. Or is it that Tibetans, like Injes, believe that nondual realization must be somehow verbalized to be valid?

display: *rol pa*.

distilled essence: *dwangs (ma)*: This denotes essence, after leaving the dross behind.

effulgence, ubiquitous effulgence: *rang gdangs chen po*: All-inclusive intrinsic radiance evokes the macrocosm as a cosmic light show, a mandala of self-envisioned lightform.

elixir: *bcud*.

essence: *ngo bo, snying po*: In the tantric essence of dharmakaya (*rgyud kyi snying po gsum*), essence is either *snying po* or *ngo bo*. The latter also denotes 'face', and *ngo bo nyid*, perhaps, 'original face'. 'Essence' is emptiness.

essential identity: *bdag nyid*: skt. atmaka: an antidote to the negativity of mahayana's 'emptiness'. It is nondual, ultimate identity because 'the essence is the appearance', where the essence and the appearance are seamlessly nondual, and so cognate with 'self-envisionment'.

essential, all-inclusive identity: *bdag nyid chen po*: mahatmaka: *Chen po* is rendered as 'all-inclusive' or possibly 'universal', but anyhow nonduality is implied. Not to be confused with Hindi 'mahatma'.

excellence: *phun sum tshogs pa*: see chapters 54, 58 and 59.

experience: *chos*: skt. dharma: In the abhidharma, or mainstream buddhist metapsychology, dharma (*chos*) in its technical sense is conventionally translated as 'phenomenon'. 'Phenomena' are to be understood as external appearances, although from the perspective of Mind Only it may refer to appearances in mind. In either case, 'phenomena' implies an objective reference. In Dzogchen, 'phenomena' as an objective reference is the product of a delusive function of the relative mind, implying karmic attachment. What in the lower approaches in a dualistic view is denominated 'phenomena' in Dzogchen must be reviewed in the unitary light of the dharmadhatu. The English word that may mean 'whatever arises', or does not arise, is simply 'experience'. All experiences are the nondual phenomena of perception, where subject and object, inner and outer, mind and its objects, are an inseparable unity. Thus, 'experience' is 'dharma', and 'intrinsic spaciousness' (dharmadhatu) is 'the ground of all experience'.

field of appearances: *yu*: objective field, either as a dualized experience in samsara or self-envisionment in nirvana.

flow: *brian pa*: The use of 'stability' as the equivalent of *brian pa* in the Dzogchen context is quite redundant, unless a contrived meditation is under discussion. In nonmeditation there is nothing to stabilize, no one to stabilize anything and no way to

bring stability. To seek stability implies a choice, an egoic act of will, with the goal of ridding oneself of current experience and seeking another that is more stable. An act of will surely precludes buddha. 'To flow naturally' is congruous with the signs of Dzogchen realization.

gnostic compassion: *thugs rje*: 'nondual compassionate responsiveness'. Gnostic compassion is without an object, subject, or action. It refers to spontaneous effulgent expression informed by nondual nonconceptual experience in the now. Relative compassion is a compassionate action towards an object or person by a subject. It refers to deliberate energetic action that a person takes toward another being under the conceptual delusion that a dualistic 'other' needs help. Relative compassion is denominated by *thugs rje* but *snying rje* is more appropriate.

ground: *gzhi*: With a few exceptions where it denotes 'base', 'ground' refers to the 'primal ground'.

holistic vision: *grub mtha'*: final existential realization. In the suppositional, argumentative schools, it may be 'philosophy' or 'tenets'. Also 'final accomplishment'.

hollow: *shubs*: 'Hollow' is a metaphoric reference to the ultimate dimension of emptiness that suffuses all experience, emphasizing its insubstantiality and thus, despite its near homophonous similarity, evoking the metaphor of the hologram. See also 'vase-body of youth', another metaphor that enshrines a 'hollow'. On the sixth stage, the three hollows are recognized as trikaya's three dimensions (chapter 75). The three hollows are the jeweline hollow, the hollow of light, and the hollow of karmic propensities, corresponding to the three dimensions of the trikaya: see chapter 81.

ignorance: *ma rig pa*: ignorance, diminished presence, absence of presence.

immaculate: *nam dag*: implies empty (*stong pa*) without attribute (*mtshan nyid med pa*); thus 'immaculate spaciousness'.

implicit, unthought: *rtog med*: see 'unthought'.

inalienable: *mi 'da' ba*: the Dzogchen commitment (samaya) is inalienable, the path is inalienable, mahamudra is inalienable.

instantaneous: *skad cig ma*: nondual realization is attained either gradually (by stages) or instantaneously (immediately). The great perfection is attained instantaneously or not at all. The word *cig car* denotes an even faster process, so although usually translated as 'instantaneously' or 'immediately' it can also be translated as 'simultaneous', 'co-emergent' or 'awakened'.

recognition (of what has always been there and known to have been there)'.

intellect: *yid*, the relative mind, which can only express itself as thought.

intrinsic presence: *rang rig*: intrinsic to the fields of consciousness.

kalpa: *skal pa*: in common parlance denoting a vast period of time (four yugas commonly comprise a kalpa), a kalpa here is also a stage of unfoldment or a period of evolution. In the timeless moment of awareness of the now a kalpa is a dimension of being. The intermediate kalpa is a dimension of the here and now; a kalpa is a sensory field. See chapter 21.

lightform: *snang ba*: see 'appearances'.

light-seed: *thig le*: pronounced 'tiklay'. If a tiklay is conceived of as a zero-point, utterly unstructured, experientially it is a point-instant or a holistic totality. Because that zero is composed of light it may be called 'light-seed', or 'nucleus', an unbounded sphere or circle, or a 'pixel'. In the first total vision it is a kind of floater, a pixel mandala; in the second vision it is a rainbow medallion or part of a pixelated field of appearances; in the third vision it is a buddha mandala (*tsboms bu*); in the fourth vision it is the nondual totality field. In trekcho, as a synonym of dharmadhatu, it is 'the sole all-inclusive megapixel' (*thig le nyag gcig*). In tsalung, it is a seminal nuclei, either red or white bodhichitta (nanopixels), flowing in the channels. A tiklay is 'the universe in a grain of sand'.

luminous mind: *byang chub sems*: skt. bodhichitta: see 'pure luminous mind'.

matrix: *klong*: 'Matrix' is used in its original Greek sense of 'womb', the place of origin where everything is created and resides in potential. In the sublime Dzogchen vision there is nothing but the matrix. It is an all-inclusive vastness of the boundless nonspatial nontemporal space of the here and now. It transcends space-time. It is sunyata; it is spaciousness-presence. It is also a point instant of experience (a 'dharma'). It must not be confused with the vast expanse of space in which the cosmos manifests, which the conventional translation of *klong* – 'expanse' – tends to denote along with the 'matrix' of materialism which consists of a formula that controls and manipulates, like God, or the DNA.

meditative absorption: *bsam gtan*, dhyana.

natural disposition: *rang sa*, *rang so*: Translated sometimes as 'the natural state', a term evocative of Thomas Hobbes' definition of the human condition as 'nasty, brutish and short' and

therefore to be avoided in Dzogchen. There is, experientially, no nondual 'state', no authentic state to attain or to lose, no fixed state. Whatever is referred to as a 'state' is a condition of the relative mind, a changing state. The authentic natural disposition is beyond words to express.

natural perfection: *gnas lugs*: literally, 'authentic condition', or 'manner of being'; 'natural perfection' is an interpretive translation.

nature: *rang bzhin*: In the context of trikaya *ngo bo* and *rang bzhin* are translated herein as 'essence' and 'nature' respectively; however, where *ngo bo* appears in conjunction with *ye shes* and *rol pa*, for instance, it is translated as 'nature', and where *rang bzhin* points at something 'inner', it has sometimes been rendered as 'essential'. See also 'essence'.

nonabiding: *gnas med*: unlocated, unlocatable [homeless].

nonconceptual: *ma rtog*, *rtog med*: see 'unthought'.

nondual, nonduality: *gnyis med*: Reality is ineffable nonduality and 'all enlightened experience of multiplicity is nondual.' Primarily 'nonduality' expresses the intrinsic union of 'knower' and 'known', subject and object, and by extension also inside and outside, self and other, as well as here and there, and past and future.

object, objective field: *yuk*: object of the five senses. See also, 'field of appearances' above.

omniscience: *thams cad mkhyen pa*: see 'twofold omniscience' in GNT. See also 'wisdom'.

path: *lam*: In Dzogchen the path is a metaphor for an instantaneous process of unfoldment – a timeless moment of experience, unless the referent is the place from which we have escaped, which is a space-time trap. As a timeless moment of awareness, it is a 'mode' or 'modality', or 'a way of perception'.

perception: *snang ba*: see 'appearance'.

pixels: *thig le*: see 'light-seed'.

potential: *yon tan*: see 'quality'.

potentiation, to fully potentiate: *rtsal rdzogs pa*: As in homeopathy, 'potentiation' carries the sense of making effective or potent, in this case by including or sustaining the creativity of pure presence within the scope of awareness of the now. 'To increase potentiation' means to increase the sense of insubstantiality, baselessness, through attention to whatever mode of expression constitutes experience in the moment. The power of potentiation is naturally carried by creative expression, or creativity (*rtsal*), and thus constantly un-reifies itself.

- present awareness: *ye shes*: Yeshe is better translated as 'awareness of the now' (see above), but frequently the context is better served by the term 'present awareness'. In the phrase 'awareness of presence (*rig pa'i ye shes*)', awareness of the now (*ye shes*) is inherent as our own intrinsic presence (*rang rig*) (see chapter 6). *Ye shes nyid* is 'awareness of the matrix' ('the original mother'). It is the primal ground as cognitive light, which recognized as such is release (see chapter 96). *Ye shes* is used 398 times in the *Tiklay Kunsel*, more than any other word except *sku*.
- primal ground: *gzhi*, *kun gzhi*: skt. *alaya*: The ground of samsara and nirvana, 'trikaya is inherent in the primal ground' (chapter 29), so envisionment is also within the primal ground (chapter 29). No distinction is made herein between 'the primal ground (*gzhi*)' and 'the universal ground (*kun gzhi*)', between the nondual essence of being and a relativistic substratum. The universal ground consciousness (see below) is a consciousness that at this level of Secret Precept exposition is not distinguished from it. See 'three aspects of the primal ground'.
- pure luminous mind: *byang chub sems*: bodhichitta: *byang* means 'pure', *chub* means 'luminous', *sems* means 'mind': sometimes translated in Mahayana contexts as 'enlightened mind'. 'Pure luminous mind' (*byang chub sems*) is also explained as the ground (*sems*) and its creativity (*byang chub*). See chapter 96.
- pure presence: *rig pa*: 'It is dharmakaya' (chapter 96). 'In pure presence, which is free of dualistic perception, the intrinsic radiance of present awareness shines out' (chapter 87). 'The five characteristics of pure presence are the emptiness of dharmakaya, intangibility, indivisibility, noncrystalizing wisdom that knows itself as such, freedom from obstacles (chapter 41). It is 'total presence', 'nonconceptual knowledge', 'ultimate awareness', 'the unity of ontic and cognitive aspects of sensory perception with an accent on the ontic aspect.' It could be 'gnosis' or 'gnostic awareness' so long as 'gnosis' brings no baggage. 'Intrinsic awareness' is the equivalent of *rang rig* but its contrary, 'extrinsic awareness', tends to burden it. Presence (of mind?) is close to the notion of 'attention', which is the meaning of *rig pa* in common parlance. *Rig pa* is not a state (of mind) that we can enter and leave.
- purity: *dag pa*: emptiness Wherever in the text 'pure' or 'purity' appears, 'empty' or 'emptiness' should be inferred. 'Immaculate' is an intensification of 'pure and empty'. *Yang dag* (vishuddhi) as the name and description of the heart chakra *yid*

dam buddha-deity likewise implies emptiness. 'Empty' and 'emptiness' are employed sparingly in the tantra, implying an extreme of expression that is to be questioned.

quality, qualities, immanent quality: *yon tan*: Qualities of present awareness or pure presence such as the forty-two sublime forms are buddha-qualities and can be denominated 'potential', or 'enlightened potential' because never crystalizing all qualities remain unborn in dharmakaya. The qualifier 'immanent' signifies buddha-qualities. In the form dimension 'quality' is the ground as well as the 'immanent' ground, but there it can be identified as specific quality.

radiance: *gdangs*: In chapter 96 'radiance' is defined as 'self-envisionment' (*rang snang*), which indicates light with form and color. This technical – and descriptive – term refers to the radiance of awareness in the now that appears in five-colored light either unmixed (sambhogakaya) or mixed (nirmanakaya). So not only are visual appearances 'radiance', but also all the manifestations of all the sensory fields. 'Manifest perception' consists only of its own radiance. In universal all-inclusive awareness, perception consists of transparent, self-envisioned, lightform, the very radiance of present awareness, which reveals awareness of pure reality (see chapter 82). Naturally pure, intrinsic radiance is like the night sky; the radiance of pure reality in the now is like the sky at dawn; the radiant light of spontaneous awareness is like sunrise (see chapter 42). Cognates: *mdangs* is 'brilliance', 'brightness', 'efflorescence', 'an exuberant radiance'; *dwangs* (*ma*) is 'distilled essence' or simply 'essence', after leaving the dross behind; *rang gdangs* is intrinsic radiance'; *rang gdangs chen po* is 'ubiquitous effulgence'.

real space: *ngang*: Whereas in later historical usage the little word *ngang* has little significance, in this tantra it refers quite definitely to the space of the nondual awareness matrix of the here and now (*kelong*), the spaciousness of the field of reality (*chos nyid*) or dharmadhatu itself (*chos dbyings*). It is definitely not three dimensional space. The qualifier 'real' refers to 'reality' itself and in no way can it be interpreted as conventional reality (illusion) and must be given status equal to the spaciousness of the dharmadhatu (*dbyings*); real space is the cognizant emptiness of the dharmadhatu with the accent on its empty spaciousness. The 'reality' of the space is derived from the essence of experience of any event, of all phenomena (*chos nyid*).

reality: *chos nyid*: skt. dharmata: also ‘spacious reality’, ‘phenomenal reality’: Reality is ‘the essential nature of all experience’ and therefore synonymous with Dzogchen itself. ‘Reality’ is ‘all-inclusive envisionment’, ‘the primal ground’, ‘present awareness’, ‘pure presence’ and ‘buddha’. In this text reality is always to be understood as ‘ultimate reality’, never as ‘concrete appearances’ or ‘phenomena’. ‘Reality, which is like the sky, and dharmakaya, which is like the sky, are ‘nondual transparency’ (chapter 91). ‘Ordinary individuals are not “released” until they realize that the ultimate nature of phenomena – reality itself – is inconceivable’ (chapter 41). Conventionally translated as ‘the true nature of phenomena’, ‘ultimate nature’ or a similar phrase, such translation tends to propel the reader into an analytic, dualistic frame of abhidharma. What needs to be inferred is always the nondual nature of ordinary experience of the here and now that is best simply termed ‘reality’.

relative mind: *yiḍ*: see ‘intellect’.

release: *grol ba*: also ‘liberation’ and as an adjective sometimes ‘unconfined’. It is defined as ‘release from striving and delusion’ in chapter 89 or frequently ‘liberation from the round of rebirth’. As a transitive verb it can be rendered as ‘release’, ‘free’ or ‘liberate’.

samadhi: *ting nge ’dzin*: contemplation: To distinguish between samten (*bsam gtan* - dhyana) and tingnedzin (*ting nge ’dzin*), although often employed interchangeably, the first is better exclusively used for meditative absorption on the graduated path and *ting nge ’dzin* for the contemplation that is nonmeditation. It is defined as ‘clarity’ or ‘one-pointed soft-focus’ in chapter 96.

secret precept: *man ngag*: skt. upadesha: This phrase has three distinct uses. 1) It denotes a literary style in dialogue form usually found as the Sanskrit upadesha in the triadic context of ‘tantra, agama and upadesha’. 2) It denotes a class of atiyoga tantra belonging to the *man ngag sde* series where it is evident that the Secret Precept Series is implied. 3) Specifically in this tantra, it denotes a string of Sanskrit mantric syllables that have some logical meaning. 4) In general, a ‘secret precept’ is a pithy instruction, originally delivered orally, pointing at the nature of mind or teaching on the Dzogchen view and meditation, and, particularly, relating to the Secret Precept Series.

sediment: *snying ma*: The five sediments are the ‘external’ residue of the essences of earth, water, fire, air and space. See chapter 19.

self-envisionment: *rang snang*: Self-envisionment or intrinsic envisionment provides the primary description of spontaneous all-inclusive envisionment of the ground (*gzhi snang chen po*). This is the awareness of presence where sublime form and present awareness are unitary in the now. This term evokes a single timeless moment of experience of the now with its empty, insubstantial, nondual coloring of pure presence, the entire cosmos in a grain of sand. In chapter 5 we find this definition: 'Self-envisionment refers to nondualistic perception in which the (subjective) source of the envisionment is not different from the (objective) envisionment itself.' Clearly self-envisionment does not imply ego-projection into one of the six realms, but on the contrary implies that the appearances in our sensory fields are inseparable from awareness of the now and therefore the vehicle of release.

self-sprung: *rang byung*.

selfless activity: *'phrin las*: Acting spontaneously out of present awareness of the now, universal necessity is served by one of four skillful means – pacifying, enriching, controlling or destroying. The rituals involving these four functions comprise a major component of lower tantric ritual magic.

six kinds of wandering mind: *rigs drug*: In order to preclude the possibility of an involuntary reification of the six beings of the six realms and eradicating the tendency to conceive of them as anything but momentary neurotic states, the word 'mind' defines the common basis of the syndromes called 'human', 'god', 'demon', 'hungry ghost', 'animal' and 'devil', and provides an ontological status similar to hobbits, auks or elves. To identify the six kinds simply as mythic beings is to run the risk of peopling one's head with them and/or identifying with a particular type – an even more pernicious kind of reification.

sky: *nam mkha'*: In Tibetan the same word serves for both sky and space. Sky is preferred herein because it is closer, warmer and made more intimate by the three skies togal meditation.

sole holistic essence: *thig le nyag cig*: or sole all-inclusive megapixel, the universe in a seed of light, or William Blake's 'universe in a grain of sand', 'the essence is the appearance.' See 'light-seed' above.

space, sky and spaciousness: *nam mkha'* and *dbyings*: No distinction exists in Tibetan between sky and space, where space is the fifth of the great elements. Sky, worshipped by the Mongols, brothers of the Tibetans, from time immemorial, as the ultimate divinity, evokes an etheric absolute more user friendly

than the cold reaches of space that separate galaxies. Anyhow, such space is the space of our space-time dimension of the third kalpa (see chapter 21) in which samsara and nirvana manifest and must be differentiated from the real space (see above) of the matrix of the here and now, which has been referred to constantly as spaciousness herein. Whether or not it is the spaciousness of awareness (*dbyings*) or the spaciousness of reality (*chos dbyings*), it is the same spaciousness.

spaciousness: *dbyings*, *chos dbyings* (pronounced 'choying'): skt.

dharmadhatu: literally, 'the sphere of dharma', 'the sphere of reality'. 'Spaciousness' or 'intrinsic spaciousness' has been used here as the English equivalent because the Dzogchen context requires an existential and experiential sense. 'Basic space' too easily allows the inference of a concrete attribute, lending itself to reification – as Longchenpa asserts, 'the dharmadhatu does not actually exist'. See Keith Dowman 1910 (*Chos dbyings mdzod* of Longchen Rabjampa).

spoken word: *sgra*: Neither 'language', which contains a complex hierarchy of meaning, nor 'sound', which has no conventional semantic meaning, is an adequate translation of *sgra*.

spontaneity: *lhun grub*: Rather than the clumsy and often ill-suited 'spontaneously present', or 'spontaneous presence', simple 'spontaneity' works, but the inference of 'instinctive' or 'impulsive' must be left behind. No better word than 'spontaneity' describes the absence of any causal base in time or space for the awareness of *rig pa*, because in direct experience it is neither a continuum (wave) nor a series of nano-instants (particles).

spontaneous all-inclusive envisionment: *gzhi snang chen po*: This phrase denotes the ultimate nondual experience of being that is intrinsic to pure presence (*rig pa*). This is how awareness of the now appears in the very moment. This is how nondual experience is articulated in its ineffable reality. This envisionment is neither relative nor absolute; it is the ultimate as a union of relative and absolute and also of cognitive and ontic aspects. Existentially, absolute truth is not to be distinguished from relative truth, except in the intellects of analytic philosophers. Experientially, absolute and relative cannot be separated in the same way that emptiness cannot be separated from form. Reality is nondual. To utilize a technical term from another discipline, 'the universal gestalt' could denote all-inclusive envisionment. 'Mahamaya', Universal Illusion, is another useful notion bearing upon the experience

of universal self-envisionment. It is spontaneous insofar as it has no cause. It is all-inclusive insofar as it incorporates everything that arises out of the timeless spaciousness of its ground. It is the 'ground appearance' insofar as it never leaves its source.

spontaneously perfected: *lhun rdzogs*: see also *lhun grub*.

stage: *sa*: skt. *bhumi*: Added to the 10 bodhisattva stages of the Mahayana, the 3 stages relating to *trikaya*'s three existential dimensions, plus the 2 unitary dimensions total 15 Vajrayana stages, and then 6 more to make Dzogchen stages. See chapter 75.

state: as in 'the state' (of *rig pa*), 'the natural state' (*gshis, gnas lugs*), 'state' or 'space' (*ngang*). The word 'state', never appropriate when referring to *rig pa*, generally evokes the notion of a fixed condition, a fixed state, a trance state, a samsaric fixation and, moreover, tends to reify the attribute. As Longchenpa says, 'The view is without basis and meditation is not a "state"' (*Spaciousness*, canto 9, verse 23). No state exists; we are all completely stateless. States by definition are always relative and temporary, from solid and gaseous chemical states to political states, to states of mind – 'What a state she's in!' – and certainly even the most prestigious, long-lasting and blissful states in the formless realms of the gods, all are on the wheel of time, in samsara. Conversely, if pure presence were a state, it also has a place on the wheel of temporal experience. But it is not a state and can never be so. Pure presence is by definition timeless, nonspatial and nondual.

storehouse consciousness: *kun gzhi nam par shes pa*: see 'universal ground consciousness' below.

sublimation: *'pho ba*: To use 'transference' as an equivalent of *phowa* is an egregious error in Dzogchen parlance – no place exists to be transferred to. 'Sublimation into the jeweline hollow' is illustrated by the metaphors of a chick hatching from an egg and or snake freeing itself from its skin' (chapter 90). The old alchemical notion of sublimation (sublimation of lead into gold) indicates a dissolution on the spot into another dimension. 'Sublimation' is a more pertinent and exact rendition of *phowa* than 'transference'. No entity exists to be 'transferred', and no place exists as a point of departure or of arrival. What occurs is an immediate, spontaneous, refinement of corporeal embodiment into a body of light. That momentary process is called 'sublimation'.

sublime form: *sku*: kaya: The quest for a single appropriate English equivalent of 'kaya' has met with only partial success – currently it is often left untranslated. The difficulty lies in its ambiguity; it denotes the form of nondual being, which may be described as holistic vision; it is conceived as threefold, in three aspects of that vision, which may be denominated 'dimensions'; it also denotes the symbolic anthropomorphic representation of the visions and dimensions in sculpture or painting. Rather than denominate this visionary experience as 'buddha-imagery', 'deities', or 'representations', 'sublime form' seems to cover the scope of both the symbols (the five buddha images) and its unpacked existential significance, a direct visionary experience. The word 'body' or 'buddha-body' is the conventional equivalent in the suppositional approaches. In Dzogchen, the dimensions of the vision are all subjective, any objectivity demeaning the vision; if it is objectified it disappears.

Sublime form, although perceptible, is best indicated as 'felt'. To demonstrate the inseparability of the 'felt' reality of sublime form from its representations, the visions of the third total level are all described in terms of symbolical sublime form, and in the mandala of Vairochana the forty-two deities likewise are 'sublime forms' as well as 'immanent qualities'. The qualifier 'sublime' has the connotation of 'beyond the threshold of ordinary consciousness' – 'sub-liminal'. Since 'sublime-form' defines a nondual dimension it should not, in general, be pluralized. This rule is broken when referring to the deities of a mandala, for instance.

sublime form and present awareness: *sku dang ye shes*: This phrase evokes both the ontic and cognitive aspects of nondual awareness. The word *sku* points at the ultimate existential nature of the form of being and *ye shes* denotes present awareness in the now (primal or primordial awareness, or alpha-pure or pristine awareness). Both *sku* and *ye shes* are nondual counters, so the phrase may be apprehended as an evocation of inexpressible nonduality. However, technically, it denotes the sambhogakaya dimension of lightform in the third total vision, where nondual vision is optimized. It vanishes in the ineffable fourth vision. But returns as buddha-body-in-the-world working for all sentient beings; it is an attainment in the bardo of dying in the cavern of clear light.

sublime vision: *dgongs pa*: In Dzogchen the vision is perfect as it is and no tendency to change or transform or convert can be

discovered. Those functions may only occur spontaneously. Any movement towards change is counterproductive, indicating a rejection of the now, seeking something better elsewhere. It may be true that transformation occurs through nonaction, but that is actualized by any tendency or preference intrinsic to nonaction. The vision is impartial, unbiased without preference, which is to say nonspatial and nontemporal, which implies nondual. It is neither 'intentional' nor 'extentional'; it is absolutely unmotivated and unmoving; it is all-inclusive envisionment.

supremacy: *phags pa che ba*: see chapter 54.

supreme: *che ba*: see chapter 54.

synchronicity: This word is used to define immanent moments of experience that are free of all cause and condition, timeless moments of unfoldment, simultaneous cause and effect, moments of universal responsiveness (*rten 'grel*), or a moment of total detachment without union or separation (*'du 'bral med pa*), a nondual, luminous event. 'Synchronicity' in the Jungian definition is experience of two or more events that are apparently causally unrelated or unlikely to occur together by chance, experienced as occurring together in a meaningful manner.

The Now, in or of the now, also pristine: *gdod ma'i*, *gdod nas*, *ye*, *ye nas*: *gdod nas* is conventionally translated as 'original' or 'primordial' and thus implying a throwback in time to its beginning, which means the distant past (Jurassic? or at the time of the Big Bang?). In Dzogchen, the origin is the matrix (*klong*) of the here and now, which is accessed by direct experience. Direct experience is a timeless moment of awareness and thus has no temporal extension, no past, present or future, no temporal beginning or end. If *gdod ma'i* is understood to mean the root of the timeless moment, an origin that lies deeper than the surface of experience, then the unity of trikaya can be adduced to indicate that only a single, zero-dimension can be located in direct experience. Note that *gdod nas* is a close synonym of *ka dag*. Further, the little word *ye* peppers Dzogchen texts and is often ignored. If it is translated as 'timeless', we have 'timeless awareness' (*ye shes*) or 'timeless matrix' (*ye klong*), which allows easy reification. But 'Yel' like 'Eh!' is an onomatopoeic evocation of the now and can be translated as such: 'awareness in the now' for *ye shes*, and 'matrix of the now' for *ye klong*. *Ye nas* is 'in the here and now'.

three existential dimensions: *sku gsum*: see 'trikaya'.

three kalpas: *skal pa gsum*: first, intermediate and final kalpas.

transparency: *zang thal*: sometimes qualified by 'ubiquitous', 'immaculate', 'stainless' etc. Regarding the dualistic model, extrinsically, we can say that all forms in the visual field are transparent; intrinsically, we can say that clear light is omnipresent. 'Transparent', *zangtal*, as an adjective, describes both the external and internal perspectives. *Zang thal* is transparent like clear light.

transparent: *dngos med zang thal*.

trikaya: *sku gsum*: 'three existential dimensions': 'Trikaya is the intrinsic clarity within present awareness of the now, like a butter-lamp inside a vase' (chapter 41). This intrinsic clarity belonging to a single experientially indivisible, ineffable, reality of being is recognized in three aspects: the formless dharmakaya, and the dimensions of form, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya. In this context 'kaya' may be translated as 'dimension', and trikaya as three dimensions; but in the context of the bardos and in togal it is inadequate. Thus, employing 'the three dimensions' is a manner of labeling aspects of unitary reality; reality is uni-dimensional or zero-dimensional, dependent merely upon linguistic preference. Thus its denominations are threefold: dharmakaya in the dimension of empty essence, sambhogakaya in the dimension of clarity and nirmanakaya in the dimension of emanation.

triple world: *kham gsam*.

two dimensions: *sku gnyis*: two 'kayas': the first is dharmakaya, the dimension of clear light and the second is rupakaya, the dimension of form, which subsumes sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya. See 'trikaya'.

unconceived: *ma rtog, rtog med*: see 'unthought'.

uncrystalizing: *ma 'gags, 'gag pa med*: This word is often translated as 'unimpeded' or 'unceasing,' but it rarely fits the context and so makes the mind crash. What in Dzogchen is 'unimpeded' or 'unstopped' is not usually an objective phenomena, a moving or flying object; it is the essential medium of experience, such as spaciousness or awareness or creativity, that is unimpeded. The meaning therefore is more like 'uncrystalizing', 'unreified' and 'intangible', and because it denotes absence of attributes it is 'indeterminate', 'nonspecific', etc. Uncrystalizing, it is also 'transparency'. It is unmanifest and therefore 'pure potential'.

uniformity (with a pejorative inclination): *phyal ba*: also *kun to phyal ba*.

unimpeded: *zang thal*: see also 'transparency' and 'uncrystalizing'.

universal ground: *kun gzhi*: see 'primal ground'.

- universal ground consciousness: *kun gzhi nam par shes pa*:
consciousness of the ground of being. No distinction is made herein between the primal ground and the universal ground of being in which this eighth field of consciousness shines. It defines the structure of samsara and nirvana that will engage through specific karmic propensity.
- unmotivated: *ma rtog, rtog med*: see 'unthought'.
- unthought: *rtog med*. *Tokme* is also 'unconceived', 'nonconceptual', 'concept-free', 'thoughtless', 'unthinking', 'implicit': when thought or conceptualization has dissolved, dualistic consciousness is lost, but not awareness. Present awareness and clarity, for example, are 'implicit in all experience'. One difficulty with 'unthought' is its implication of what the mind prefers not to conceive, rather than what cannot be conceived of due to its intrinsic unconceivability, like clarity or emptiness, for example.
- vase-body of youth: *gzhon nu bum sku*. The vase is a metaphor for the skin of lightform on top of open-ended spaciousness or, rather, since the skin of lightform and the open-ended spaciousness cannot be separated, it is a unity of lightform and spaciousness. The vase-body is alpha-pure inner space. See Keith Dowman 2014, Appendix 4.
- view: *lta ba* skt. darshana: In conformity with the conventional usage in Buddhist philosophy, where it is an intellectual perspective (darshana) upon reality, *lta ba* is rendered 'view' herein. In Dzogchen, since the view is also the meditation, finally no intellectual element is contained in the consummate view, and the view is nondual and spontaneous and always the same, almost identical to *dgongs pa*, (guru-) vision.
- vision, *dgongs pa, snang ba*: The word 'vision' appears herein in two senses, which are not interchangeable. The first sense is found in the translation of *dgongs pa* (see 'sublime vision' above), which in Vajrayana is frequently rendered as 'enlightened intent' – 'buddha intentionality'. Tulku Thondup, for one, uses *dgongs pa* to signify what we 'see' in the moment as the Great Perfection, which is 'vision'. Where the context does not explicate 'vision' as a synonym of Dzogchen, the adjective 'sublime' has been added – 'sublime vision'. The second sense is as a secondary translation of *snang ba*, the primary meaning of which is 'appearance', and which is found in *snang bzhi*, 'the four visions', where the first vision is a flash of *dgongs pa* and the last vision its fulfillment and consummation.
- vision: *snang ba*: see 'appearance'.

visionary experience: *snang ba*.

visions, four: *dgongs pa bzhi*: not the same as in the four togal 'visions'.

In lesser approaches, *dgongs pa* refers to a vision that is the goal of practice and therefore an aspiration with a mental tendency attached to it. In Dzogchen the vision is the actuality of the now. See 'vision'.

wandering minds, wandering beings: *'gro ba*: or migrant beings, sentient beings.

wisdom: *shes rab*: skt. prajna: This word is usually avoided in later Dzogchen texts, presumably because it evokes the prajnaparamita ('perfection of wisdom') of the Mahayana. In this tantra, however, sherab is used widely and has been translated as wisdom. (How is it to be translated if 'wisdom' has been employed to render *ye shes*?). In English, wisdom connotes discursive knowledge; in this tantric context 'unchanging wisdom' is always nonconceptual wisdom and virtually synonymous with present awareness (*ye shes*). 'Spaciousness, awareness of presence and unchanging wisdom are the same, without distinction' (chapter 88 p.208). 'Wisdom' can thus describe the attributes of present awareness; the five aspects of awareness are also denominated herein as 'the five wisdoms'. 'Discriminating awareness' (see chapter 88) particularly is 'discriminating wisdom', but also 'complete awareness' or 'perfect awareness' is nondiscriminate. wisdom (see chapter 88). Thus attributes of *ye shes* are relegated to the faculty of wisdom, which, however, is nondiscursive and does not relate to the relative mind.

youthful vase-body: *gzhon nu bum sku*: see 'vase-body'.

zero appearances: *ngo bo nyid kyi snang*: skt. dharmadhatu: Zero appearance refers to the nondual experience of 'empty awareness-appearance.'

zero-dimension: *ngo bo nyid kyi sku*: skt. svabhavikakaya: the one, all-inclusive, existential dimension (which may be the equivalent of 'the original face'). Zero dimension refers to the dimensionless experience of nonduality, where time and space dissolve together with all cognitive superimpositions (the source of illusory fragmentation) and only the unified dimensionless field of awareness remains. Because awareness cannot be divided into dimensions, it may be termed 'zero-dimension.'

zero-essence: *ngo bo nyid*: the cognitive essence (cognitive emptiness).

Selected Sanskrit-English Concordance

adi-guru:	the first guru
alayavijnana:	universal ground consciousness, 'storehouse', consciousness of karmic impulsion
anuyoga:	the eighth of the nine approaches
arhat:	a theravadin high achiever
atiyoga	the ninth of the nine approaches, Dzogchen
bindu:	tiklay: seed, pixel, sphere, circle
bodhichitta:	pure luminous mind, buddha mind of compassion
bodhisattva:	1. A mahayana high achiever, 'tenderfoot buddha'; 2. An adept of the bodhisattva yana; 3. A buddha emanation in nirmanakaya.
brahmarandhra:	the top of the central channel at the fontanel
buddha:	full awareness in the here and now
chitta:	mind (honorific)
dakini:	female personification of awareness
dharma:	experience of reality
dharmadhatu:	the unbounded sphere of spaciousness
dharmakaya:	the dimension of ultimate reality
dhyana:	meditative absorption
ganachakra	a ritual feast gathering
heruka:	dynamic awareness in the here and now
hinayana	the lowest three approaches
kaliyuga:	the fourth and final aeon of temporal existence
kaya:	sublime form
mahasiddha:	an adept in mahamudra, one of 84
mahayoga:	the seventh of the nine approaches
mandala:	an integrated circle of light
mara:	'a demon-tempter'
maya:	magical illusion

nirmana:	emanation
nirmanakaya:	the dimension of magical emanation
nirvana:	release from attachment
padma:	lotus
prajna:	insight into all experience as empty; wisdom
prajnaparamita:	the perfection of wisdom
pratyekabuddha:	a solitary practitioner on the second approach
ratna:	jewel
rupakaya:	the dual dimension of form
sadhana:	a lifestyle suffused by awareness; an individualized spiritual practice
samadhi:	contemplation [a trance state]
Samantabhadra:	Kuntuzangpo, the all-good awareness in the now
samaya:	commitment
sambhoga:	enjoyment
sambhogakaya:	dimension of five colored lightform, of pure and total enjoyment
samsara:	state of fixated positive or negative attachment
shakti:	female energy accessed by the male, power
shamata:	concentration or calm-abiding meditation
shravaka:	'auditor' on the first of the nine approaches
skandha:	psycho-physical aggregate, a constituent of body-mind
stupa:	three dimensional symbolic representation of buddha
sugata:	'resident in bliss'
sugatagarbha:	buddha nature, womb of bliss
tantra:	Dzogchen atiyoga text
tathagata:	'gone into authentic being'
trikaya:	three dimensions of buddha being
vajra:	symbolic thunderbolt representing indestructible awareness
vajradhatu:	the unbounded sphere of adamantine awareness
vajrayana:	the multiple means approach to buddha
vipasyana:	insight meditation

Selected Tibetan – English Dzogchen Vocabulary

[Square brackets contain secondary or alternate equivalents]

NB Many of these definitions are relevant only in Dzogchen contexts.

a ti: Sanskrit: also *Maha-Ati*: The Supreme, The Great Supreme, synonymous with Dzogchen.

ka dag: alpha-pure

bskal pa, *skal pa*: kalpa: a period of time, aeon; to interrupt, intervene; obscuration, intervention, a sensory field

kun snang chen po: universal manifestation

kun tu bdat: (present awareness) equalizing everything, permeating everything

kun tu khod snyoms pa: completely homogeneous, smoothed out, levelled out, even

kun gzhi: skt. alaya: primal ground, universal ground

kun gzhi mam par shes pa: skt. alayavijnana: universal ground consciousness

sku: skt. kaya: sublime form: bodily dimension, compassionate sublime form ['bodies' with attributes (emanations), not embodiment, sublime image, the buddha-teacher's pure being]

sku dang ye shes: sublime form and present awareness [the buddha dimensions and pristine awareness]

sku ru: (denominated as) sublime form

sku gsum: skt. trikaya: three dimensions [existential dimensions]

sku gsum ja log chen po: complete trikaya inversion

skye mched: skt. ayatana: sense faculties [bases of cognition]

kham: skt. dhatus: sense fields, fields of experience

mkhyen pa: knowledge, cognizance, omniscience, intuitive wisdom

rgya ma chad pa: unrestricted

rgyud: skt. tantra

grub mtha': final holistic vision [final revelation, final accomplishment]

dgongs pa: vision, sublime vision

grol: release, liberation, freedom; released, unconfined

grol ba med: bondage, confinement

ngang: real space [spaciousness]

nges 'khor: true retinue [definitive-]

ngo sprad: pointing out introduction, introduction to the nature of mind, 'pointing out'

ngo bo nyid: essence, original face, zero, very essence

ngo bo nyid kyi sku: zero dimension

ngo bo nyid kyi snang: zero appearance

angos med: intangible, insubstantial, indefinite, unreal [diaphanous, evanescent]

che ba: excellence, supreme

chen po: great, grand, inclusive, all-inclusive, all-embracing, vast, 'immense', 'unique universal and unsurpassed' 'uncontrived and without a superior', 'self-sprung', universal [self-existent, unconditioned, ultimate, infinite]

chos sku chen po: all-inclusive existential dimension of dharmakaya

chos nyid: reality, spacious reality, phenomenal reality

chos nyid snying po: the essence of reality

chos nyid mi rtog chos skus rtsal gcod pa: 'creative expression is dissolved by concept-free dharmakaya reality'

ja log: 'inverted'

nyon rmongs: afflictive emotions, passion

snyigs ma: sediment [dross]

snying po: essence, [heart drop]

gtan tshig: justification [reason]

gti mug: stupidity

ting nge 'dzin: samadhi, contemplation

rtog med, ma rtog: unthought, unconceived, implicit, nonconceptual, unmotivated [erroneously for *rtogs med*]

ston pa: buddha-teacher, Teacher [Sakyamuni]

stobs gyis: automatically

thabs: skt. upaya: skillful means, method

thams cad mkhyen pa: omniscience

mtha': extreme

mtha' phyin: ultimate fruition, final achievement

mtha' bzhi: four conceptual extremes [limitations]

thig le: skt. bindu, tilaka: light-seed, holistic light-seed, holistic essence, seed of light, pixel, seminal nucleus, bodhichitta [sphere, seed-light, zero point]

thig le nyag gcig: sole holistic seed of light
thugs rje: compassion, gnostic compassion
'thun pa, mthun pa: to be compatible, congruous, in harmony
thengs gsum: thrice, three times [occasions]

dangs, dangs ma: distilled essence [sap, pure essence]
dangs pa: to settle
gdangs: radiance, radiant [clear light (*gsal*) of dharmakaya – radiance
 (*gdangs*) of sambhogakaya]
bdag nyid: essential identity [enlightened identity, self-identity]
bdag nyid chen po: skt. mahatmaka: essential all-embracing identity
mdangs: brilliance, lustre; erroneous for *gdangs* [*mdangs* is 'one third'
 more dense than *gdangs*]
'du bral med pa: in neither union nor separation, without union or
 separation
'dug tshuk: character
de kho na nyid, de nyid: skt. tathata: 'ineffable zing of reality'
bde chen: skt. mahasukha: pure pleasure, bliss, blissful
don: actuality, meaning, ultimate reality

rnam snang chen po: Mahavairocana, Universal Manifestation
rnam dag: skt. vishuddhi: immaculate, utterly pure (pure and empty)
rnal 'byor pa: adept, yogin
snang ba: appearance, appearances, perception, vision

'phags pa che ba: supremacy [supreme, exalted]
phyang chad: nothingness, vacuous emptiness
spyad med: unpracticed
phrin las bzhi: four selfless activities
phung po lnga: skt. panchaskandha: five body-mind aggregates, psycho-
 physical aggregates
phun sum tshogs pa: excellence
sprul sku: pronounced 'tulku': skt. nirmanakaya: dimension of magical
 nirmanakaya manifestation, emanation
phyogs ris med pa: without spatial or temporal distinction
phyogs lhung med pa'i shes rab: nonconceptual impartial wisdom
 [nonspatial, nontemporal wisdom]
spyod pa: conduct [action, behavior]
spros brah: unelaborated, simple
'pho ba: sublimation [transference]

bag chags: karmic propensity, habit patterns, habits,
bya brtsal: directed endeavor

bya brtsal med pa: without any directed effort

byang chub sems: pure luminous mind ['enlightened mind', pure bodhi mind]

dbang po: skt. indriya: sense organ [power]

'bras bu: fruition, goal, result

sbubs: hollow [cavern, interiority, cocoon]

ma 'gags pa, mi 'gags pa: uncrystalizing, indeterminable, unimpeded, incessant change, incessant, unsolidifying, fluid, unreified, intangible, nonspecific [noncrystalizing]

ma nor: flawless, error-free, authentic

ma rig pa: ignorance, absence or lack of presence, diminished presence

man ngag: skt. upadesha, secret precept, [pith instruction]

mi 'da' ba: inalienable

mu bzhi: the four alternatives [options, possibilities]: see chapter 94

rmongs pa: confusion

rtsa: skt. nadi: channels, root

rtsal: creativity, creative expression [skill, strength]

rtsal mdangs, rtsal gdangs: radiant creativity

rtsal gzhi (gzhi'i rtsal): creative ground [ground of creativity]

rtse: one-pointed soft-focus

tshig don: definition, literal meaning, essential meaning [definitive~ interpretive~ applied~ meaning, wisdom]

tshogs bryad: the eight fields of consciousness [eight consciousness-aggregates]

rdzu phrul: skt. rddhi: magical power [magical transformation, emanation]

zhi gnas: calm-abiding [peaceful place, concentration-meditation]

gzhi: ground, primal ground

gzhi chen po: all-inclusive ground, self-existent ground

gzhi gnas (gzhi la gnas pa): fundamentally inherent [inherent in the primal ground]

gzhi snang: all-inclusive envisionment ['universal illusion', gestalt]

gzhi snang chen po: spontaneous all-inclusive envisionment [or the all-inclusive self-sprung ground-envisionment or the self-sprung vision of the primal ground; 'the great illusion']

zang thak: transparent, transparence; ubiquitous all-inclusive transparency, unimpeded [omnipresent (clear light, awareness)]

gzugs sku gnyis: two dimensions of form, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya

yang dag: authentic [see also *rnam dag*]

yangs pa: unbounded, vast

yum: female buddha consort

yuk: object, field, objective field, field of appearances

ye nas: in the now [timeless, from the beginning]

ye shes: skt. jnana: present awareness, awareness, awareness of the now, pristine awareness

ye shes chen po: all-inclusive present awareness

ye shes rang rig chen po: all-inclusive awareness of intrinsic presence

yon tan: quality, immanent quality; potential, immanent or pure potential, manifest quality [enlightened quality]

rang gdangs: intrinsic radiance

rang gdangs chen po: *rang mdangs chen po*: effulgence, ubiquitous effulgence [all-inclusive intrinsic radiance, 'cosmic sound and light show']

rang snang: self-envisionment [natural appearances]

rang sa zin: assumes primacy, returns to its own place

rang sar: in the natural condition, primacy, in its own place, as its stands, in its own ground

rang gsal: intrinsic clarity, natural clarity

rig pa: pure presence, presence

rig 'dzin: skt. vidhyadhara: knowledge-bearers, embodiments of Dzogchen

rigs kyi bu: best beloved ['son of noble family']

rigs lnga: five families

rigs mthun: compatible with

rigs bzhi: four families

rigs gsum: three families

rlung: skt. prana: energy, vital energy, breath, [wind, air, subtle energy]

la bzla ba, *las bzlas pa*: to be resolved

lung: skt. agama: oral instruction, transmission

shugs: skt. shakti: inspiring, energetic, effortless

shes rab: wisdom, either nonconceptual or discriminating

shes rab kyi rtsal: wisdom-creativity

gsal ba: clarity, light [luminosity, lucency, transparency]

gsal ba: to shine, manifest, appear, be clear, bright

bsam gtan: meditative absorption, absorption

srog rtsa: life-root [lifeline, aorta, life vein]

lhun grub: spontaneity [spontaneous presence]

lhun rdzogs: spontaneous perfection

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NB The entries and definitions in this Index and the following Index of Tibetan Words provide equivalents irrespective of grammatical value.

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Concordance of Tibetan Words Defined in the Text

NB Ordered according to vowel sequence a i u e o.

<i>skabs</i>	paragraph
<i>skal pa</i>	a field of appearances
<i>bskal pa</i>	kalpa
<i>skyabs</i>	refuge
<i>dkyi' 'khor</i>	mandala
<i>kun</i>	all
<i>kun byed</i>	all-creating
<i>sku</i>	sublime form
<i>sku gsum ja log chen po</i>	complete inversion of trikaya
<i>sku gsum mtha' la bskeyal ba</i>	consummate trikaya
<i>sku gsum rnam par gzbag pa</i>	structured trikaya
<i>skye mched</i>	sense faculty
<i>skyes bu</i>	noble individual
<i>skyon</i>	fault,error
<i>khams</i>	sense field
<i>mkha' 'gro ma</i>	dakini, sky-dancer
<i>'khrul pa</i>	delusion
<i>khong khro</i>	malice
<i>'khor ba</i>	samsara
<i>gang gi phyir</i>	for what reason
<i>rgya ma chad pa</i>	unrestricted
<i>sgra</i>	sound
<i>sgrib</i>	obscuraton
<i>gru</i>	boat
<i>grub mtha'</i>	final holistic vision
<i>grub pa</i>	accomplishment
<i>'gyu ba</i>	movement
<i>'gyur ba med goms</i>	familiarization
<i>'gyur ba med pa</i>	unchanging or immutable
<i>'gyur med pa'i klong</i>	immutable matrix
<i>rgyud</i>	continuity

<i>rgyud</i>	tantra
<i>sgrub tu med pa</i>	nothing to accomplish
<i>gol</i>	deviation
<i>gol sgrib med pa</i>	absence of deviation and obscurization
<i>gol sa sgrib pa</i>	going astray, sidetracking or obscurization
<i>grol</i>	release
<i>dgongs pa</i>	sublime vision or guardian
<i>'gro ba dul ba'i sku gsum</i>	converter of wandering minds
<i>sgom med blo gzhag med</i>	nonmeditation without support
<i>sgo</i>	doorway
<i>sgrod pa</i>	traversing
<i>sgron ma</i>	lamp
<i>nga</i>	'T'
<i>nga rgyal</i>	pride
<i>ngang dangs bdag nyid chen po</i>	brilliant space of identity
<i>lnga ldan rdzogs ldan</i>	fivefold perfection
<i>nges tshig</i>	semantic definition
<i>ngo bo</i>	essence
<i>ngo bo nyid kyi sku</i>	zero-dimension
<i>ngo bo nyid kyi snang</i>	zero-appearance
<i>ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum</i>	trikaya triad
<i>angos med stong pa</i>	intangible emptiness
<i>sngon byung</i>	the very first
<i>ci'i' phyir</i>	why
<i>'chang</i>	bearer or holder
<i>chub</i>	fullness
<i>chub</i>	mind
<i>chen po</i>	great
<i>chen po</i>	unique, universal
<i>chen po</i>	vast, immense, all-inclusive
<i>chos</i>	experience
<i>chos sku</i>	dharmakaya
<i>chos nyid</i>	nature of phenomena
<i>chos nyid</i>	reality
<i>mchog</i>	supreme
<i>'jig rten gyi sgron ma</i>	lamp of the world
<i>gnyis su med pa</i>	non-dual

snyigs ma lnga

five sediments

lta ba

view

ting nge 'dzin

samadhi

gti mug

stupidity

rtog tshogs

thinking

rtogs pa mngon 'gyur sangs rgyas

realization of manifest buddha

stong pa

empty

ston pa

buddha-teacher

stobs

strength

thabs

skillful means

mtha' dang bral ba

free of extremes

mthar phyin

completion

mthar phyin mthar thug pa

final view or ultimate view

thig le

holistic essence, holistic light-seed

thig le nyag gcig

sole holistic light-seed

thugs

buddha mind

thugs rje

compassion

thugs rje 'byung ba'i sku gsum

trikaya, source of compassion

thog ma

first

thogs pa med pa

nowhere obstructed

dangs ma lnga

five distilled essences

de

that

de ltar

like that

de 'dra

similarly

de phyir ni

that is why

de bzbin

accordingly

de bzbin gshogs pa

sugata

'dod chags

desire

don dam kun rdzob

absolute and relative truth

don ma rtogs

non-realization

dri

odor

gdangs

radiance

bdag nyid chen po

essential all-embracing identity

bdag po

master

bdag med

selfless

'da' dka'

inescapable

'da' rgyu med pa

unassailable

'da' mi srid pa

invariable

'das pa'i dus

past

<i>'di</i>	this
<i>'di yang</i>	this also
<i>'driś pa</i>	habituation
<i>'du 'bral med pa</i>	neither union nor separation
<i>'du shes</i>	ideation
<i>'dus ma byas</i>	unconditioned or unconditional
<i>'dus ma byas</i>	uncompounded
<i>'dus ma byas pa'i ye shes chen po</i>	all-inclusive yeshe
<i>sdug</i>	sorrow
<i>lde mig</i>	key
<i>rdo rje sems dpa'</i>	Vajrasattva
<i>gnas</i>	realm
<i>gnas</i>	simply abiding
<i>gnas pa</i>	to abide
<i>gnas mi dgos pa</i>	concentration redundant
<i>rnam grangs tshig</i>	synonyms
<i>rnam pa</i>	mode
<i>rnam par dag pa</i>	immaculate
<i>rnams</i>	plural sign
<i>rnal 'byor</i>	yoga is union
<i>snang rgyan rgyan du bkod pa</i>	visible structured decoration
<i>snang ba</i>	appearance
<i>snang ba chen po</i>	spontaneous all-embracing
<i>snang ba rnam dag</i>	appearance
<i>nor</i>	utterly pure vision
	mistake
<i>pad ma bde gsal</i>	lotus of blissful clarity
<i>dpa'</i>	inspired bravery
<i>dpal</i>	respect or glory
<i>dpal</i>	glorious
<i>dpe</i>	metaphor or simile
<i>sprul sku</i>	nirmanakaya
<i>spyod pa</i>	conduct
<i>spros bral gyi dbyings</i>	spaciousness of the excluded middle
<i>'phral 'byung</i>	adventitiousness
<i>phyin ci log</i>	misconception
<i>phyir mi ldog pa, mi ldog pa</i>	irreversibility
<i>'phrin las</i>	selfless activity

<i>'phrin las</i>	selfless action
<i>phung po</i>	heap
<i>phung po gsum</i>	three groups
<i>phul du phyin pa</i>	pre-eminent
<i>bya ba byed pa 'phrin las</i>	ordinary behavior
<i>bya brtsal rnams las 'das pa</i>	beyond any deliberate effort
<i>bya btsal rdzogs</i>	end of deliberate effort
<i>byang</i>	enlightened
<i>byang chub sems</i>	pure luminous mind
<i>byang chub sems dpa' nyid</i>	bodhisattva
<i>dbang po</i>	power
<i>'bar ba</i>	ablaze
<i>'bral ba med</i>	without separation
<i>'bras bu</i>	fruition
<i>'bras bu mngon par gsal ba'i dus</i>	manifest fruition
<i>'bras bu 'bras bu'i ngang la gnas pa</i>	fruition within fruition
<i>'bras bu gzhi la grub pa</i>	fruition present at the start
<i>bla na med pa</i>	unsurpassable
<i>dbyings</i>	spaciousness
<i>dbyings dang ye shes</i>	spaciousness and awareness
<i>dbugs med 'gyu ba</i>	breathless movement
<i>sbubs</i>	hollow
<i>dbye</i>	categories
<i>ma bskyod rdzogs pa</i>	unshakeable perfection
<i>ma bcos pa</i>	uncontrived
<i>ma 'gags pa</i>	noncrystalizing or unreified
<i>ma rtogs</i>	absence of realization
<i>ma mthong</i>	blindness
<i>ma 'dres rdzogs pa</i>	unadulterated perfection
<i>ma 'phros</i>	undiffused
<i>ma byon klong</i>	matrix of the future
<i>ma yengs</i>	undistracted
<i>ma rig pa</i>	ignorance
<i>ma rig pa</i>	diminished presence
<i>ma bslang pa</i>	unstructured
<i>ma lus pa</i>	without exception
<i>ma shes</i>	misunderstanding
<i>ma shes</i>	unknowing
<i>man ngag rgyan du bkod pa</i>	secret precept as adornment
<i>mi</i>	human birth
<i>mi gnas pa</i>	unlocated or nonabiding

<i>mi 'da' ba</i>	inalienable
<i>ming</i>	name
<i>dmigs pa'i yul las bral ba</i>	freedom from points of reference
<i>smin pa</i>	maturation
<i>mun pa</i>	darkness
<i>med pa</i>	absence
<i>mo</i>	woman
<i>'od snang</i>	lightform
<i>'od zer</i>	sunlight
<i>'od gsal rang snang</i>	self-envisioning clear light
<i>rtsal</i>	creativity
<i>gtso 'khor</i>	principal and retinue
<i>mdzad spyod</i>	enlightened behavior
<i>mdzes</i>	beauty
<i>rdzogs pa</i>	perfection' or completion
<i>gzhi</i>	ground
<i>gzhi</i>	primal ground
<i>gzhi gnas</i>	fundamentally inherent
<i>la gnas pa'i sku gsum</i>	trikaya, fundamentally inherent
<i>gzhi gzhung</i>	scripture
<i>gzhi'i snang</i>	all-inclusive envisionment
<i>zhe sdang</i>	hatred
<i>zab pa</i>	profound
<i>gzugs</i>	form
<i>yang dag</i>	authentic
<i>yangs pa</i>	vast or infinite
<i>yan lag</i>	branch
<i>yab yum</i>	male and female consort
<i>yul</i>	field of appearances
<i>ye nas 'du 'bral med pa</i>	absence of union or separation
<i>ye shes</i>	present awareness
<i>ye shes nyid</i>	present awareness itself
<i>yon tan</i>	immanent qualities
<i>rang byung</i>	self-sprung
<i>rang byung ye shes chen po</i>	self-sprung all-inclusive awareness
<i>rang bzhin</i>	intrinsic nature

rang bzhin gyi rnam par dag pa
rang rig
rang lugs
rig pa
rig pa 'od gsal
rig pa'i ye shes
rigs lnga'i sangs rgyas
rigs gsum
reg
ro

intrinsically immaculate
 intrinsic presence
 natural disposition
 pure presence
 clear light of pure presence
 awareness of presence
 five families' buddha
 triad of types or buddha-families
 touch
 taste

lam
lam la bgrod du med pa
lung rnam rgyan di bkod pa
le'u
longs sku

path
 no path to traverse
 agama teaching as adornment
 chapter
 sambhogakaya

shar ba
shugs
shes pa

arising or dawning
 inspiration
 to understand

sang rgyas
gsang ba
bsam gtan
srid pa
sems
sems
sems can thams cad
sems dpa' sems ma
sel ba
gser

buddha
 secret
 meditative absorption
 becoming
 mind
 relative mind
 sentient beings
 male and female bodhisattvas
 elimination
 gold

lha
lha mo
lhun drub ye sangs rgya

god
 goddess
 buddha in the now

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